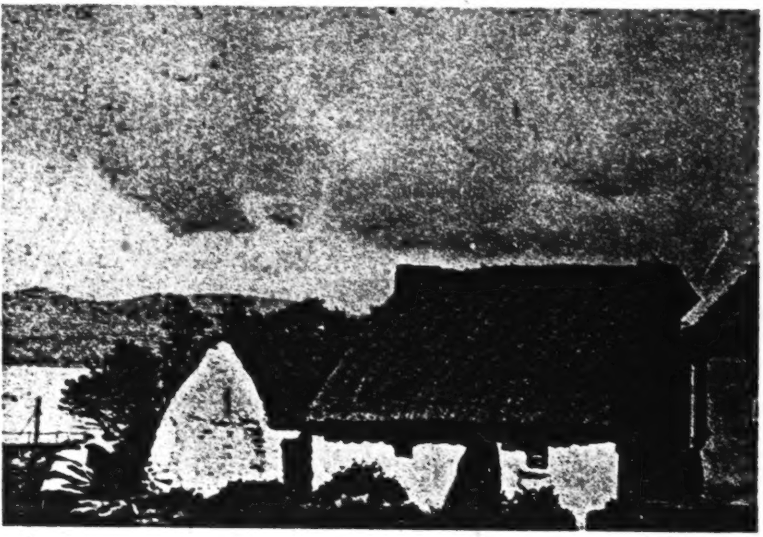
1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

● 342



An Irish Cottage

[facing p. iii]

activities in small farm economy. The plots so designated 231
are devoted, respectively, to cattle-grazing, hay, tillage crops 241
for human and animal consumption, and turf for fuel, and 311
rough summer grazing. Nearer the house is the farmyard
or "haggard," in which the hayrick and turfrick are and
other supplies, such as potatoes stored in straw bins, stand
ready for household and farm use.

The house opens directly into the haggard. There are 231
the cabins, in which the cattle are housed, and the various 343
sheds and stalls, often built out of the dry masonry of the
house itself, in which the farm machines, traps, sidecars, 351
carts, and other vehicles are kept. Hens and other poultry
roam at will through the haggard and are fed and housed
there, and in one of the sheds the pig or pigs find their
quarters. As for the house itself, which gives orientation to
the haggard and is responsible for the spatial arrangements
in it, we shall have occasion to discuss it somewhat later.

Figure 8 gives a schematic view of the kind of farm called 231
"all-purpose land" by the Irish Land Commission. This view 241
is a composite and represents no single farm, but it is taken 311
from direct observation of many in Clare. It depicts a
mountain farm in which bog land is included. Otherwise it
would do for any area.

Figure 9 gives a schematic view of a house and haggard 342
also in Clare. This is modeled after a house in which one of 343
the authors spent considerable time as a guest, and is care-
fully and faithfully depicted. But it serves, too, as a general 351
plan for all such houses of small farmers.

The daily activity of the farm family and the daily work 512
which its members carry on center round the house and haggard. Even for the men, whose primary work lies in the fields, gardens, and meadows, work centers in and round the house for a good part of the year. A short sketch of the daily activity which may be observed in any peasant farmhouse will throw into relief the work done by the various

[text continues on p. 35]

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

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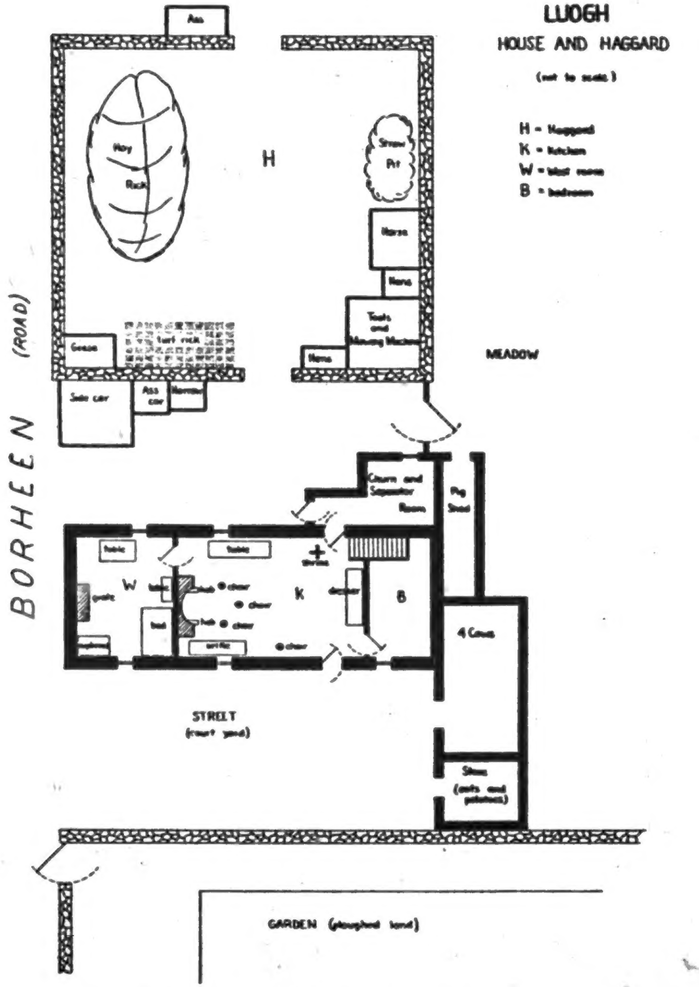
343
351

FIGURE 9


LUOGH
HOUSE AND HAGGARD
(not to scale)
H = Haggard
K = kitchen
W = west room
B = bedroom
Ass
H
Hay
Rick
Straw
Pit
Horse
Hens
Tools and Mowing Machine
Hens
Geese
turf rick
(ROAD)
BORHEEN
Side car
Ass car
Harrow
MEADOW
Churn and Separator Room
Pig Stead
table
table
shrine
W
table
hob
chair
chair
hob
chair
K
dresser
B
quilts
bed
settle
chair
4 Cows
STREET
(court yard)
GARDEN (ploughed land)

Schematic plan of a typical small farmer's house and farmyard, illustrating his familist economy and functional division of his household.

[p. 34]

561 571 794 When the whole population of a country district is on the move on Sunday, the groupings are especially noteworthy. There are occasional family groups driving in the jaunty car, but generally the older men walk in a group of their own, the older women in another. The young men walk together by themselves and the young women by themselves. On Sunday afternoons the young men can be seen at the nearest crossroad standing together in groups of ten to thirty, while the older men keep more to their houses or visit one another. Before mass, when the weather permits, the men congregate outside the church and do not move in until all the women have entered and the priest has arrived. As the groups stand outside waiting for the mass to begin and gossiping back and forth, the older men stand off together and the younger men keep to themselves. In wakes, weddings, christenings, the same age groupings are observed.

561 571 There is, of course, no formal prescription of such behavior nor formal taboo against its infringement; the conduct rather springs from the divisions of the family and the solidarity of the individuals occupying similar status as these forces operate in everyday life. It is evident how close a connection exists between age grading and marital status.

[561] ● 342 If behavior of this type reflects the age grading within the family and the transitions between age grades which are part of the transformation of the family at marriage, so does the arrangement of the house interior. For a graphic representation of this characteristic arrangement, let the reader return to Figure 9.[1] [565] The houses of the small farmers show a remarkable uniformity over great areas; it becomes at once apparent that the variations in house types and forms are more associable with differences of class than of locality. But as we are dealing only with the small farmer or peasant class, we need concern ourselves only with the implications of the striking uniformity in house form among the country people. Throughout West and North Clare the house is rectangular

[1] [see p. 34. -Analyst]

and consists ordinarily of a kitchen, occupying the greater 342
part of the rectangle, and a second room, behind the hearth and chimney which occupy most of one end of the kitchen. There are sometimes one or two bedrooms at the opposite end of the kitchen, in addition. In East Clare this type of house is common, but there is also a squarer type which may have a second story.

The tiny peasant cabins dating from the last century are of the West Clare type; they were and are single-gabled, rectangular blocks of one or two rooms, with steep, thatched roofs and a single half-door on each side. The half-doors open directly out of the kitchen, the one to the windward kept closed. The modern stone cottages erected by the [362]
governmental agencies and patterned after those built first by the Congested Districts Board (1893–1923) are slated and weatherproofed. Except for additional four rooms, they represent the same pattern. It is impossible to give a statistical statement of the occurrence of this type of house or to correlate its numbers with those of the small farm families, but housing records show that 36 per cent of Clare's population live in three-room dwellings, 24 per cent in four-room dwellings, and 12 per cent in two-room dwellings, which seems to point to a fairly close correspondence between the proportion of small farm population to total population.

In the small farmer's house of this type, the kitchen is 592
the seat of family life. In it are the hearth, at which cooking 352
is done, the table around which the family — first the adult
males, then the women and children — eat, the kitchen 353
utensils, and the religious shrine of the "Blessed Lamp" and [778]
the Sacred Heart picture before which the family prays the "Family Rosary" at night. Here also is the "dresser" found in nearly every small farmer's house, a sideboard filled [415]
with fancy china and porcelain used only for family festivals and to give to marrying relatives. The family will part

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

must. They descend from father to son with the house and 600
the farm on which it stands.

It is into this room that the old couple move upon the 592
son's marriage. They move in among the symbols of family 888
unity, among the religious symbols of the house, into surroundings of a certain religious or sacred character. If we can discover certain other indications of the nature of this room, we shall feel warranted in drawing conclusions as to the nature of the change which takes place in the status of the old couple and the attitudes which surround them.

This room we have described is the "west room" men- 592
tioned in the "writings." It is so literally. With remarkable 342 ●
uniformity the small farmers' houses in West and North 775
Clare face east and west, the room behind the hearth being
generally at the west end of the house. Now the west room 888
and the western end of the house are associated in folklore with the "fairies" which still flourish in the countrymen's minds, especially among the older generation.

The Irish "fairies" include the spirits of the dead. In fact, the identity between the two is explicitly recognized. It was so at Luogh, where older men could name the "good people" with whom they had had encounters.

It is the west room and the western end of the house that the fairies frequent. Where a fairy path is believed to pass the house, it passes invariably along the western end of the house. The country people of Luogh and other parts of West Clare give this as the reason why no extensions, outhouses, sheds, or other structures are built on that side; bad luck would result. In Luogh none of the twenty-five houses of the townland had any structure of any sort built there. And it is often in this room that the fairies spend the night when they visit a house on their nocturnal travels. If we remember that the old people, relinquishing their adult status and preparing for death, move into this room amid heirlooms, religious pictures, and photographs of dead

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

542
● 342 members of the household, we are forced to postulate the
775 sacred and semireligious nature of the attitudes surround-
888 ing the old couple and identifying them with the forces
of the dead and the symbolic unity of the family, past and
present.

581 The match is a mechanism, from one point of view, for
preservation of family unity through the sequence of the
842 generations. The dominant interest of the old couple in the
606 "new woman" brings this point out most forcefully. They
183 are vitally concerned in providing heirs for the line. Consequently their evaluation of the "new woman" is made upon the score of her fertility. Their desire is as strong as hers. She must have children.

The chief reflection of this fact is not to be found in economic expressions, frequent as they are. Children mean more hands for the working corporation. The farmers express their desire for them once again in terms of "help." But help might be obtained in other ways, for it can be hired. Rather it is the continuity of the human nexus which is the true goal. The fact that much of the relationship between the old couple and the "new woman" is built around her childbearing illustrates where the motivating interest lies.

606 The old couple appraise their daughter-in-law accord-
842 ingly. The first year of the girl's new position is a time of
apprenticeship. Work is light. Pregnancy is her major
183 duty. All during her childbearing years the old woman aids her and helps her, praising her in terms of her increase and showing as great an interest in the arriving children as the mother. One countryman puts it as follows:

> This [a smooth relationship between the old couple and the new woman] carries on for seven or eight months, but, if then the old people do not see evidence of increase of young, then the boy's father's people get angry and abuse her, but if they do, they do not let her do any work and are so proud.

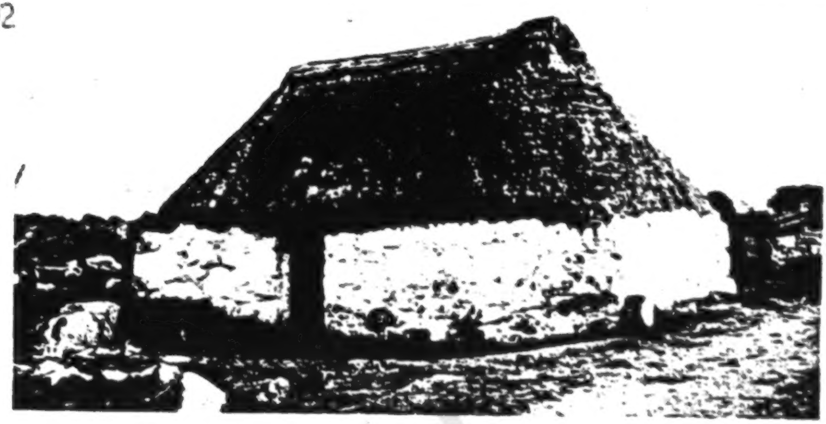
[facing p.182]

A VILLAGE ON A HILLTOP WITH ITS GARDENS AND PASTURES

COUNTY GALWAY

PLATE XLI

342



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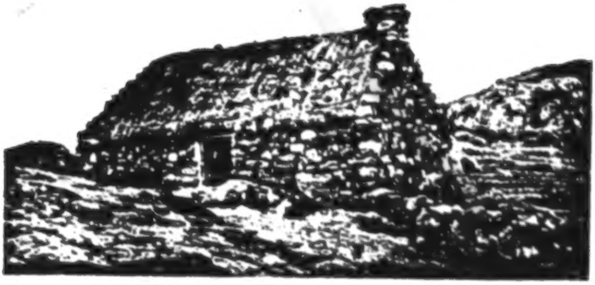

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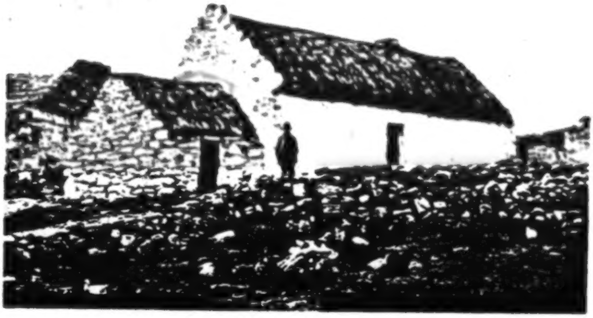


3.

1. Central-chimney house. Spiddle. Co. Galway.

2. Gable-chimney house. The weaver's house. Gorumna, Co. Galway.

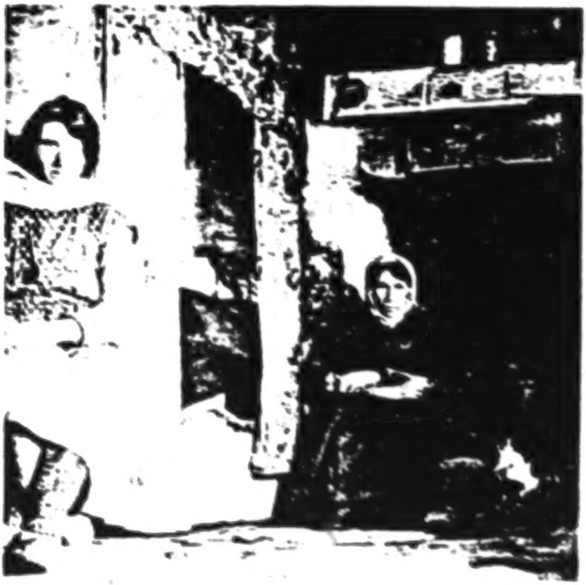
3. Central-chimney house. Gorumna, Co. Galway.

[p.205]

2. Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Mayo

PLATE XLII

142
291

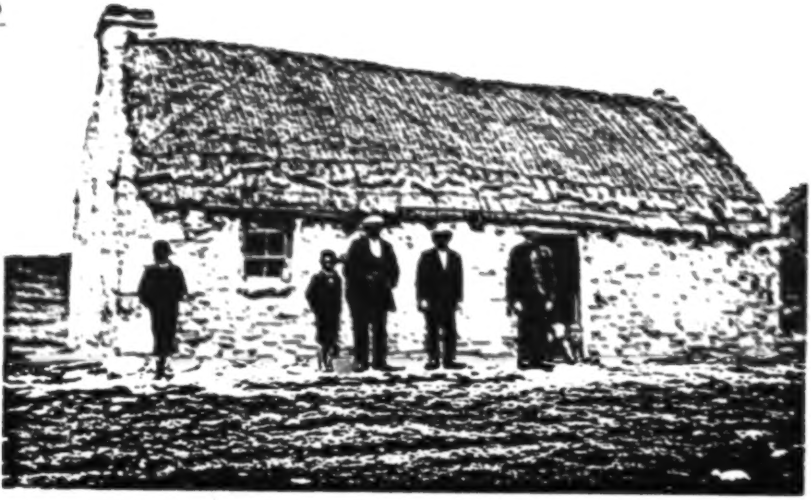


1.

1. The cailleach built close to the fireplace. Fallmore, Co. Mayo.

2. Gable-chimney house. Belmullet, Co. Mayo.

342



2.

[p.206]

341 called the first type *the central-chimney house,* because the chimney will be erected over the fire-place somewhere about the middle of the roof, (fig. 1 and pl. XLI: 1, 2, 3; the second *the gable chimney house* because here the chimney will be close to the gable often being built as a part of the stone-built gable (fig. 2 and pl. XLI: 2). The outside chimney then not seldom forms a pronounced gabletop or gable-finial.

The Central-chimney house.

342 Some of the most primitive houses I found in Ireland belong to the central chimney house type. To illustrate I choose a house from Spiddle, Co. Galway (fig. 3 and pl. XLI: 1). The house is said to have been built before 1839 and to have withstood the "big wind" of that year. How old it actually is I had no means of discovering. The walls are of stone with the mortar put on afterwards on the inside and outside, but not used in the actual construction of the walls. Some outhouses belonging to this farm are all of dry wall construction. The roof of straw rests on couples of beams, supported on the inner edge of the walls, so that the thatch does not quite reach as far as the outside edge of the wall, but leaves a narrow space uncovered. [171] This is an archaic feature found now in very old buildings in Ireland, as always in the black houses of Scotland.

The house is built on a slope, so that the fireplace end of the house lies higher than the entrance door. There is only one room, but a low partition wall at the back of the fire cuts off a section which is used as a bedroom. [352] In the lower end of the house a dresser is placed so that it together with a small table cuts off another section that nowadays is also used as a bedroom. Some stools, a cradle and a churn are the other contents. There are two doors opposite of each other, both provided with half-doors. The fireplace consists of some flat stones on the floor. Over the fireplace there is a [354] wattled chimney resting on two beams, supported by a cross beam. The chimney is adapted to a hole in the thatched roof, so there is no outside chimney. On one side of the house, the sheltered side, there are two windows.

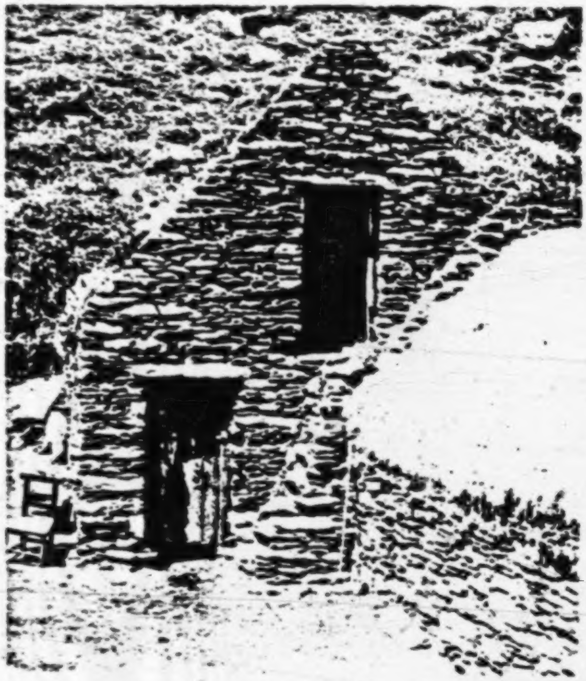
About other houses of the same kind, I have heard from the inhabitants [231] that in olden times the lower end of the house was used for the cattle. In late times the cattle have been removed to an outhouse and this part of the house has been adopted as a living room.

342
171 The division of the house into three sections, which is characteristic of the central-chimney house type, is quite clear in the Scottish houses, namely the black houses, the bedroom being at the upper end of the house behind the

[TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P.211]

● 342 1. Dry stone walls. Cillrialaig, Co. Kerry.

2. Oval house. Inveran, Co. Galway.



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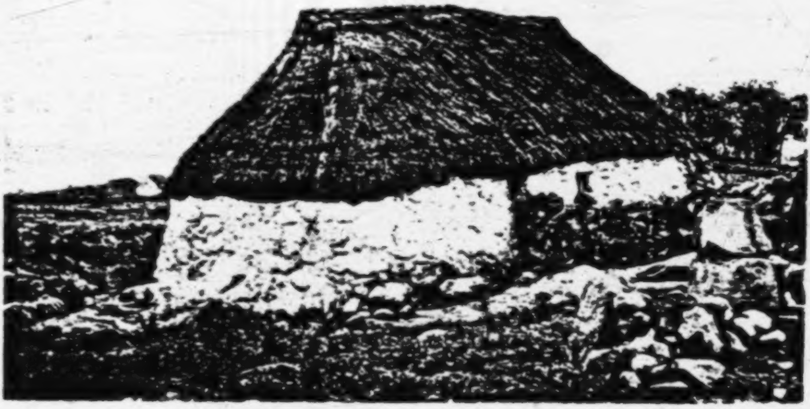


2.

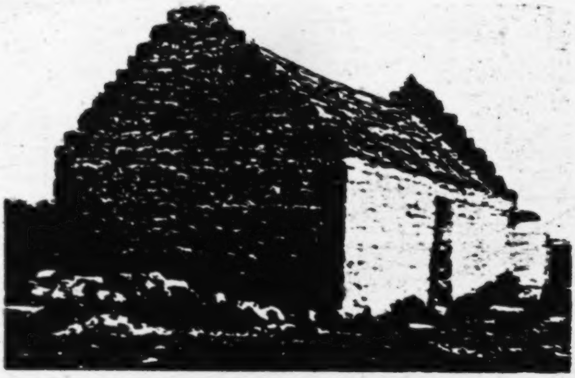
[p. 209]

PLATE XLIV

1. House with stepgables. The small stones interlying the bigger stones. Annaghdown, Co. Galway.

2. Roof-construction. Annaghdown, Co. Galway.

3. The gables facing the sea. Cillrialaig, Co. Kerry.



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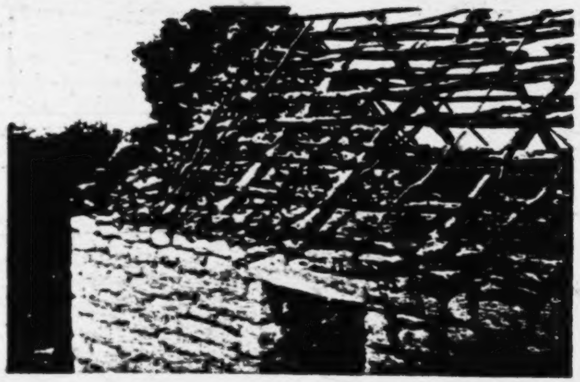


2.

3.

[p.210]

342 fire, and the byre at the lower end of the house. In the Welsh long-house
171 the hearth generally seems to face the living room and bedroom part of the house, and cuts these sections from the byre part. The two doors, opposite to each other, very typical of the Irish house (see p. 217), are also found in the Welsh long-houses, but here the space between the two doors has a more pronounced feeding-walk character, than we find common in Ireland, at least to-day when the cattle are generally removed from the dwelling house. For the three sections of some South Scandinavian houses see p. 222.

The gable-chimney house.

342 In various parts of Ireland I have found numbers of primitive houses with stone-built gables. These houses are always rectangular in form, never oval. Externally the type varies greatly depending mostly on the prevailing wind. On the coast, in very windy districts, the roof will not be built very high, but in more sheltered parts, it will be more lofty.

The gable finial, the gable top often consitutes a very characteristic feature of this house-type, pl. XLII: 2. Only where the low roof is used, the gable top is not especially accentuated. The outside chimney constitutes the gable top of the chimney-gable. On the opposite gable the gable-finial may be form-
[341] ed in a corresponding way, as a chimneyshaft without any flue. The chimney-shafts at the gables form perhaps the single example in the Irish peasant house of intentional architecture conforming with a wide-spread custom in Western Europe. As regards the serrated gable-ends see p. 226.

342 In small dwellings of this type there is only one room, the fireplace is si-
354 tuated against one gable-wall. The most convenient place for the beds is be-
352 side the fire, and at least one bed is to be found here. This is a very original feature of this house-type which is confirmed by Scottish material, old Irish descriptions, and even drawings. In the middle-west and north of Ireland, the bed is built in a projection outwards, *cailleach,* or at least in a niche in the side wall close to the fireplace, pl. XLII: 2, as in the Scottish *tig dubh.*

342 As in the central-chimney house, there are sometimes two doors opposite each other, but even a single door is common in small oid houses.

Windows have come at a later period here also. In old-fashioned houses there is generally only one window, sometimes none at all.

342 At the lower end of the house, there was in more remote times place for
231 domestic animals. The division of the room by means of the dresser may have been adopted at an early stage, the dresser being especially suitable as

342 231 a kind of partition. When the domestic animals were removed, often to an additional building at the gablewall, this part of the house would be used as a living room, just as in the former type of house, fig. 4. In a few very primitive houses of this as well as of the foregoing type I have found fireplaces with no chimney at all, the smoke leaving the house through a hole in the roof above the fireplace. Sometimes I have found two smoke holes, one in each end of the roof. The doors and half doors constitute together with the smokeholes a complicated machinery, providing the current of air to regulate the turf-fire and the smoke. 342 354

Dwelling houses without chimneys were found by me in 1935 at Belmullet, Co. Mayo and in Co. Sligo.

342 The houses with thatched gables sometimes have rounded corners so that the base foundation may have an almost oval shape on the outside, while the inside room may be rectangular in form, pl. XLIII: 2. It is evident that the oval house form and the thatched gables complement each other. They could have existed together from a very early stage in building traditions. In a windy district the rounded and thatched gables are suitable, as the house will be more stream lined.

The roof with a thatched gable can easily have replaced the stone, or cyclopic roof, in cabins and huts (both, bothán). This fact and certain similarities would seem to indicate that the oval house form in the abovementioned houses with thatched gables, may have developed from the round or beehive house type. Parallels may be found among the stone-built huts with similar roofs in Estremadura and elsewhere. [171]

On the other hand, houses with stone-built gables represent quite clearly the rectangular house type, as in such constructions the gables are never rounded.

342 346 The stone-built gable constitutes a very practical way of solving the problem of how to protect the gable ends of the roof of an oblong house against the wind, pl. XLIV: 3. But there is another point to be considered. In mediæval houses in villages and cities, the gables have often developed according to the use and importance of the gable wall; when the house faces the street or main road the gable wall would be far more important than the side walls. Other features point to ecclesiastical architecture. In the early churches, in Ireland and elsewhere, the gable wall constituted the front wall. In Ireland the early primitive churches were often furnished with pronounced gable finials. Furthermore it has been suggested that the introduction of the rectangular form of house is due to the first propagators of Christianity

in Ireland, as we find in an early Irish stanza predicting this and other Christian innovations (Life of St. Patrick, translated by Colgan, p. 123). 342 346

It seems to me to be very likely that the above mentioned architecture of villages, towns and churches in Western Europe, giving prominence to the gable-wall, may have played an important role in the development of rectangular houses with stone-built gables in Ireland and elsewhere in Western Europe. As to Irish conditions, I would observe that the very small primitive rectangular churches, hardly bigger than an ordinary house, known from the Aran Islands and other places, have surely been built by no other builders than those who built the peasant houses. The clergy instructed them and planned the architecture. Then the people learned that the stone built gable was very useful both as protection for the ends of the thatched roof and as an arrangement for the fire, readily forming a chimney or stone-built venthole for the smoke. 346

But the early Christian churches cannot have constituted the original primitive form for every kind of rectangular house in Western Europe. As Addy (Addy: Evolution of the English House, p. 38 sq.) has mentioned, very primitive huts built in "bays" formed by "crucks" are known from the Welsh Laws as "Summer Houses". These houses consisted of a pair of "crucks" and a ridge-tree, and were completed by wattles. This form of house can be shown to be of great antiquity and can be studied over a large area. Material from Africa, the Mediterranean countries, the countries on the shores of the Atlantic, show that the square form is of greater antiquity than Christianity, so it does not follow that the rectangular house in Western Europe must necessarily owe its origin to Christian innovations, it can very well go back to a much earlier form of culture. 171

Regarding the higher development of the cruck-construction (or crutch) as discussed by S. O. Addy with examples from England, I would observe that the small stone-built one-storeyed Irish houses, the primitive Welsh long-house, the black houses of Scotland, as well as the small houses of Scandinavia and elsewhere have been sufficiently roofed by a very primitive small roof of pairs of beams, similar to that of the above mentioned huts, summerhouses etc. Even circular huts may have been roofed by a thatched roof, resting on a radial framework of branches without any central pole as in the Sudan circular hut, *tukl,* mentioned by A. E. Robinson, who has suggested that some prehistoric huts in Ancient Britain were of the *tukl* type (Antiquity 1930, p. 230). In Lewis (Scotland) according to Thomas (Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, Vol. III, p. 130) circu- 342 171

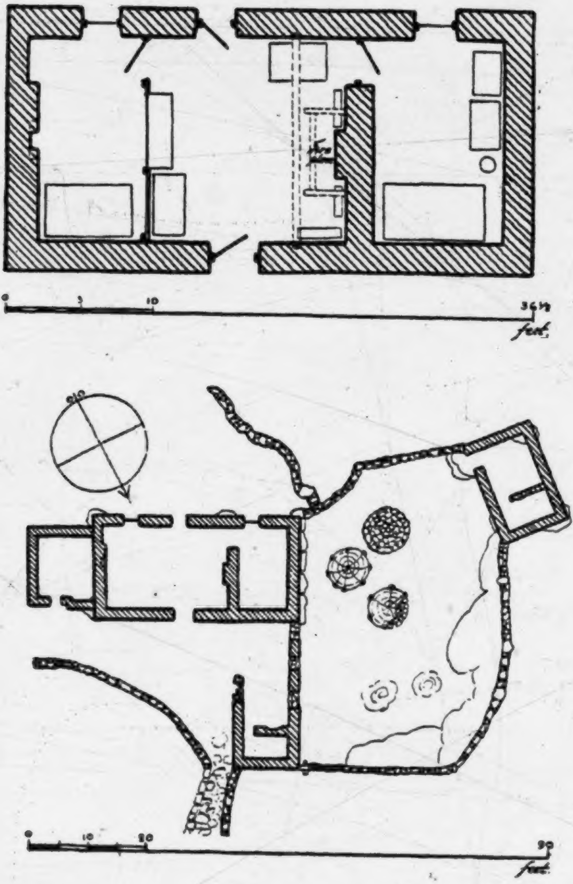


Fig. 1. Central-chimney house. Gorumna, Co. Galway.

lar stone roofed houses *bothan*, existed side by side with timber proofed oblong houses called *aridhean* (p. 138).

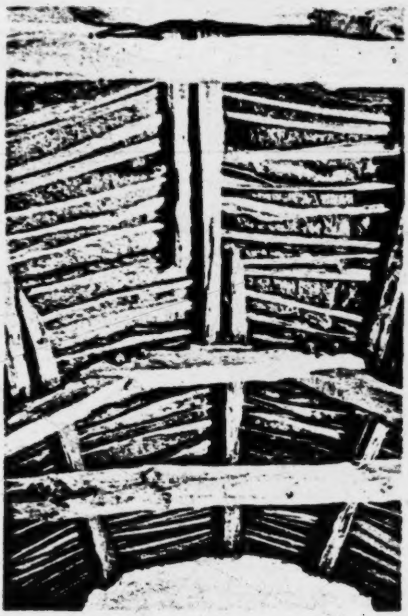
The highly developed roof-constructions of the English cracktype, as well as those of the Saxon and other West European houses, have been of little or no importance for the development of Spanish, Welsh[3], Scottish and Scandinavian houses in early or in later times. The cruck construction as well as the roof construction with supporting poles seems to belong to a more limited sphere of building traditions. This fact however does not exclude the possibility that these traditions could have been in some way —

[Text continues top of p. 217---Analyst]

County Donegal

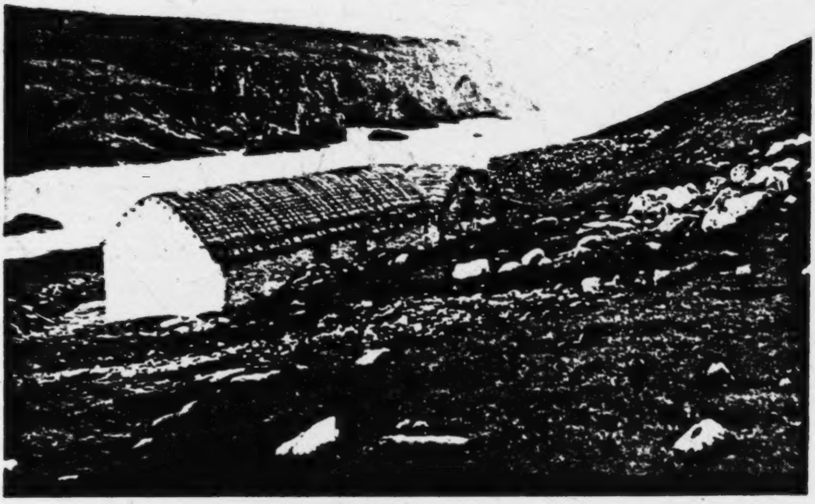
342 1. Roof with couples joined by two crossbeams. Glencolumbkille, Co. Donegal.

2. Stream-lined roof. Port, Glencolumbkille, Co. Donegal.



1.

[133]



2

[p.215]

PLATE XLVI

342
417

1.

342

2.

[p.216] [Captions on P.217, bottom]

342 771 as a result of certain circumstances, such as social organisation, the demands and standard of the aristocracy, the clan, and the family etc. — introduced in Ireland, Scandinavia and other parts of Europe. This appears from some prehistoric materials as for example the Gall Arus near Dingle, Co. Kerry, and the so-called "kämpagravshuset" and the Viking Hall in Scandinavia.

Some of the features mentioned above in the descriptions of the central chimney-house and the gable-chimney house are common to nearly all primitive recent Irish houses.

342 354 It is especially interesting to notice the practice of providing two doorways, central and opposite, fig. 1, 3 and 4. In recent Irish houses the front door is called *doras tosaigh,* and the backdoor *doras cúl.* In Donegal however, I was told that the front door was called *doras an fhosgaidh,* door of the shelter, and the back door, *doras nagaoithe.* The opening and the closing of these two doors is determined by theprevailing wind, and its effect on the draught through the smokeholes. Thus the two doors were very often in Ireland made up of halfdoors, *leath dhoras,* constituting in co-operation with the smoke holes a machinery regulating the fire. In Ireland this is generally a turf-fire which needs special attention in its making, lighting and maintenance. The drawing off the smoke is also of importance.

342 777 Some superstitions connected with these two doors suggest that very old traditions lie behind them. There is a belief in Co. Kerry that it is very unlucky to go in one door and out the other. You must always go out of the door you entered by, otherwise you are supposed to take the luck of the house with you.

342 How the two doorways could be used with regard to the cattle I have shown by an example from Co. Kerry in my article in Béaloideas (op. cit. p. 70).

The two doorways are well-known from the Ancient Irish Laws and the old literature. The inches house and even larger houses had two doorways, a door in one and a hurdle (wattle) in the other (see Ancient Irish laws, Vol. IV, p. 305). O'Carry says that the principal house, even of kings, had but one room to which when the house was of an oblong form there were generally two doors, one opening east and one west. In the round houses on the other hand there seems to have been but one door, which faced south, west or east, and sometimes though rarely north. (O'Curry, Manners and customs of the ancient Irish. Vol. I). 342 171 In Scottish beehive houses inhabited about 1850 however, there are often two opposite doors, about which Thomas says: "The two doors are a decided improvement, for the one upon the side on which the wind blows — that is, the weater door — is closed with a stone or

PLATE XLVI

1. Fastening the hay-ropes, when thatching. Glencolumbkille, Co. Donegal.
2. Scollop-thatching. Connemara, Co. Galway.

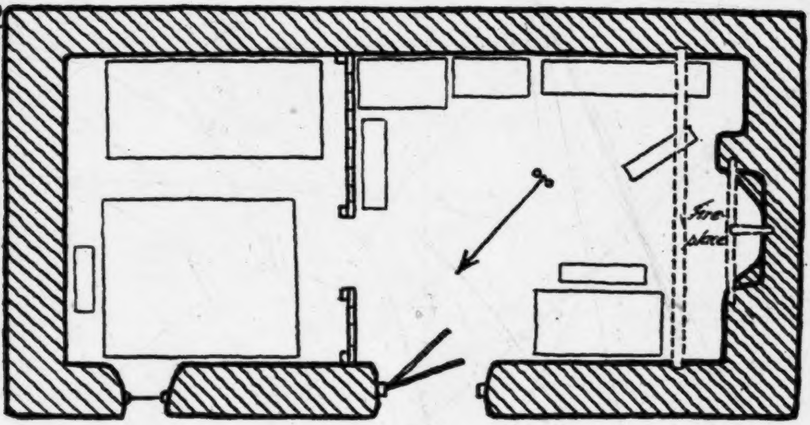


Fig. 2. Gable-chimney house. The weaver's house. Gorumma, Co. Galway.

turf, while the lee one is left open, and a gentle draught carries the smoke serenely above the heads of the inhabitants and through the Farlos (the smoke-hole in the apex of the roof)" F. L. W. Thomas, in Proceedings of the Soc. of Antiquaries of Scotland, vol. III and vol. VII.

Also in Wales the two opposite doors have been known from prehistoric times to recent days. The Welsh long-house generally has these doors (see I. C. Peate, Welsh houses, Antiquity, 1936). They have also been found in prehistoric Welsh farm buildings excavated by Cyril and Aileen Fox (see Cyril and Ailen Fox, Forts and Farms on Margam Mountain, Glamorgan, Antiquity, 1934, p. 395 sq.).

The use of two opposite doors is however widespread. In Denmark and Southern Sweden (the plainlands in Skåne) the turf-fire was common until 1900, and the inside chimney is not so very old. In the 18th century, houses without any chimney were common, the two opposite doors and even the halfdoors being used for the regulation of the fire in the same way as in Ireland (see Åke Campbell, Skånska bygder under förra hälften av 1700-talet, Uppsala 1928, p. 208 sqq.). The complete stone-built chimney was introduced earlier in the woodlands of Scandinavia, where the wood-fire was common and the fire was not regulated by any two-door system.

In Spain and Italy I have seen the two doors, and Sigurd Erixon (in Den romerska Campagnans herdehyddor och deras konstruktiva karaktär, Arkeologiska studier tillägnade H. K. H. Kronprins Gustaf Adolf, Stockholm 1932, p. 255, p. 261 and p. 124 sqq. in this number) has mentioned them when

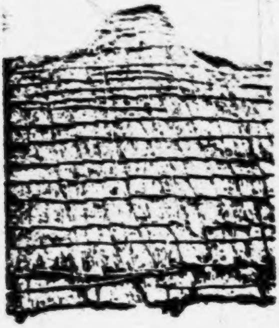
[TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P. 221 ----- ANALYST]

PLATE XLVII

283 1. Thatched-chimney. Co. Clare.

342 2. Making hay-ropes. Glencolumbkille, Co. Donegal.

3. Hobwalls carrying the chimney. Toormakeady, Co. Galway.



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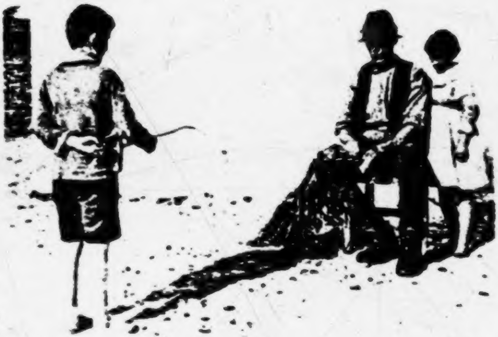

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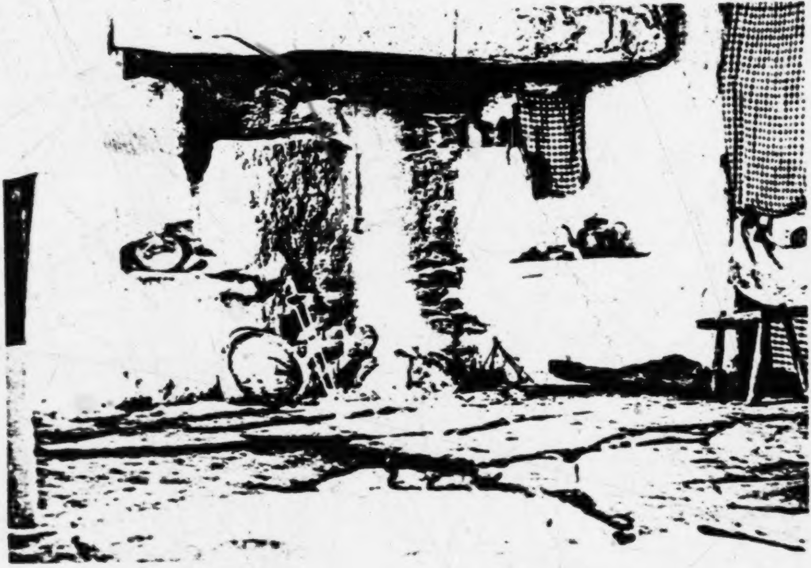

3.

[p. 219]

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Donegal

PLATE XLVIII

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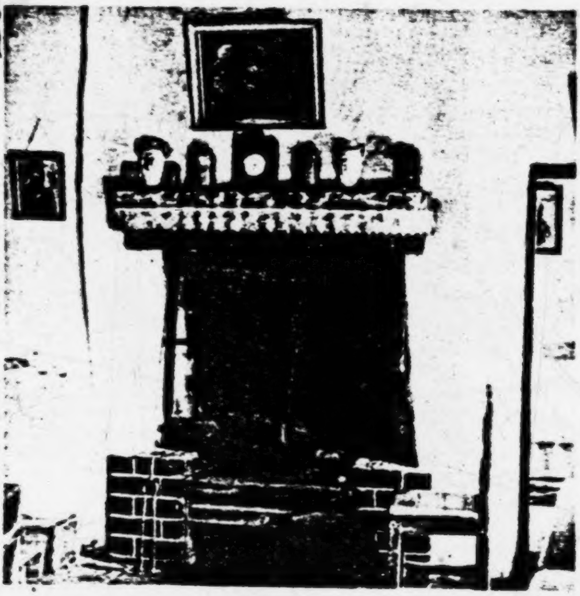

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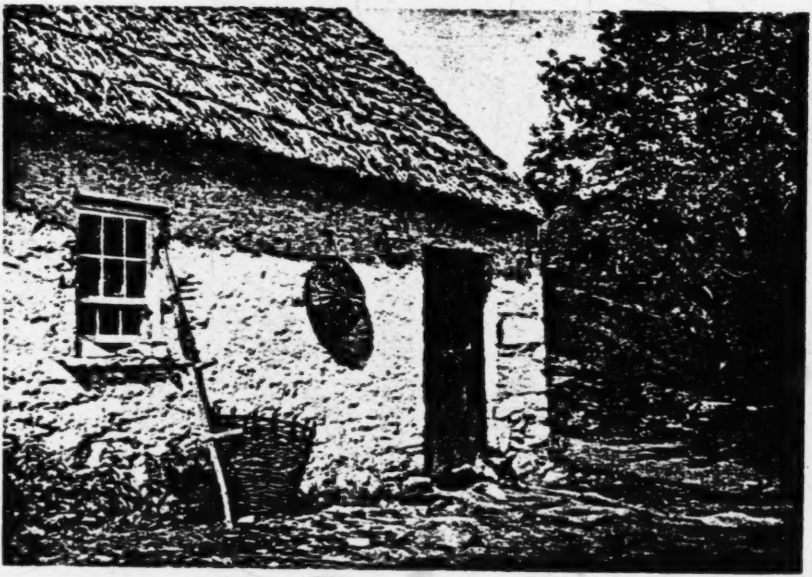

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1. Fire-place with iron-grate. Glencolumbkille, Co. Donegal.

2. The basket hanging to dry on the southwall of the house. Lough Eske, Co. Donegal.

[p,220]

●342 171 discussing the herdsmen's oval and square straw-built houses in the Roman Campagna. He indicates two different systems (1) the smoke leaving through the door and (2) the smoke leaving through a hole in the roof.

In English and especially in Saxon and other West European houses, the two opposite doors sometimes are placed in the same way as in the Welsh longhouses, or in the Irish houses, but the broad plan of these extremely large buildings makes the comparisons very vague.

Besides the types now mentioned which form the basis for the development of native house types, we find in Ireland of the present day many house types which are likely of foreign origin mostly introduced by government and landlord activities.

Belonging to this group I must also reckon a feature of housebuilding which is found particularly in Leinster and Eastern Connaught but also scattered here and there in other parts of the country. This distribution more [412] or less coincides with the distribution of the two-eared English spade, while the native type of house coincides with the single-eared Irish spade.

A partition of stone, mud or wood and lath is built on the side of the fireplace adjacent to the door, so that a person sitting at the fire cannot be seen through the open door. In the partition is a spyhole, through which one can see who is entering by the door, fig. 5.

This adjacence of fire and door with intervening partition is wellknown in England. As far as my knowledge goes I cannot look upon this as being an independent or original Irish type. Everything points to its being a late innovation. Such houses usually have a porch built at the entrance door and the arrangements of the rooms are not at all primitive.

The developed stone built house.

342 It is evident that as soon the primitive one-roomed stage is left, it will be difficult or impossible to decide whether the house represents the traditions of the central-chimney house or the traditions of the gable-chimney house.

In two ways the one-roomed stage has been left (1) by dividing up the one-roomed house by partition walls, (2) by building additions to it at the gables.

Usually it seems that the room at the lower end of the house has been made by building a thin partition wall, *sileail,* which separates it from the other part of the house, fig. 2 and 4. It is as far as I know, very unusual to build an addition to this part of the house. When new rooms are made by building additions, these are usually made to the chimney or fireplace gable.

342 This custom should be compared with the proverb which I have heard in different parts of Western Ireland: "Only a man stronger than God can [539] build back (westward) of his house" *(Is treise ná Dia an fear a chuireann siar le na theach").* Additions made at the fireplace end of the house are always used as bedrooms. Therefore it will be very difficult to decide whether the bedroom behind the fireplace has originated as an addition to a gable-chimney house or as a partition of a central chimney house. When the wall behind the fire-place does not reach the roof the house must be regarded as a central-chimney house. Now and then it is also possible to discover in another way whether the bedroom belongs to the original house, or is built as an addition to a gable-chimney house.

In both house types the partition walls at the lower end of the house very often were made by very thin wooden partitions, *síleála.* As already mentioned, furniture especially the dresser may be used instead of a partition wall, fig. 1.

In Eastern and Southern Ireland you will find the fireplace cut off to a certain degree from the living room and forming a special kitchen corner by stone-built breasts or piers at both or at one side of the fire-place. This side wall of the fire-place can also be built of wood, fig. 6, and can go a good way into the room, so that the kitchen corner will be more like a closed room.

342 Such houses with fireplace partition apparently have their parallels in 171 Welsh houses. The Irish house, then, closely resembles to the living room of the Welsh long-house. This type of Irish house can be called "house with fireplace partition".

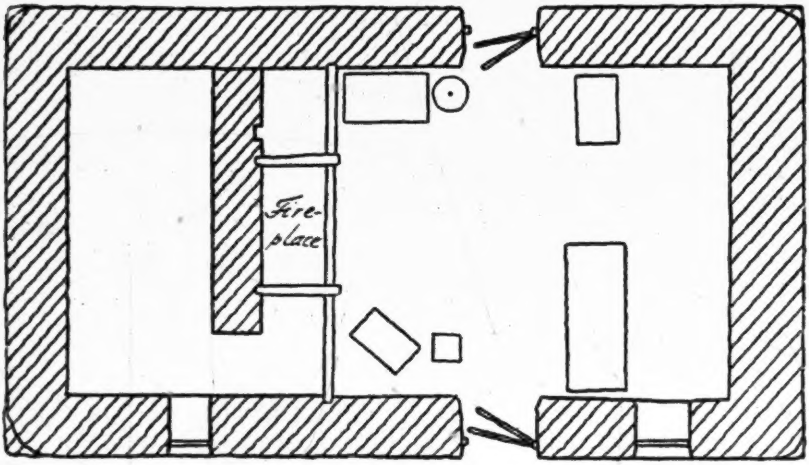
Another way of arranging accommodation in the house is to build lofts, *lochta,* and rooms on an upper floor. This upper floor will be arranged at both ends of the living room or kitchen. Then the arrangement with the house divided into three sections and with lofts at both ends is very similar to a house type in southern Sweden, the socalled Sydgötiska huset.[4] which has the kitchen or "stugan" in the centre of the house without any loft and at both ends additional chambers with lofts. Another likeness between the Irish and South Swedish houses is that there are bedplaces in the same way in the additional rooms.

[417] In the Irish house the loft can be reached by a ladder from the kitchen.

The construction of the different elements of the house.

342 Lacking nearly every architectural consciousness and at the same time every kind of imported building-material, the Irish peasant house never

2: Campbell B,E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Galway



342 ●

Fig. 3. Central-chimney house. Spiddle, Co. Galway.

stands out in bold relief against its background, but melts into it even as a tree or a rock. Built of stone, clay, sods, grass and straw brought from the vicinity, the house harmonizes with the landscape to which it belongs. Whenever the old building traditions are faithfully maintained its features are of a fine simplicity.

Here I shall not describe how the house has been determined by the different types of landscape, and by the social structure of the human community, to which it belongs. I only observe that the settlements and houses often are scattered but sometimes can be found built in groups or rows. 361 342

Very archaic dwelling houses generally are erected on a slope, the difference in level between the high end and the low end of the house being one, two or three feet. In houses where the farm animals have been under the same roof as the family, the places for the animals always were at the low end and the fireplace and bedplaces at the high end. This is the same arrangement as in the Scottish black houses.

The floor. The floor is commonly earthen, but generally paved at the fireplace. Now and then the upper end of the house is totally paved, or the whole floor is flagged. Very often the place round the fire is distinctly separated from the rest of the floor by its special paving. In modern times the floor is very often concrete. A covering with wooden boards at the upper end of the house and in the bedroom is often to be seen now-a-days. The stone or earth- 342

The stone or earth-

342 en floor may be sprinkled for instance with coral beachsand to help in sweeping it.

[356] In some primitive houses, where the cattle still had their places, in the
[231] low end, I have found a gutter or conduit going across the low end and leading out through the door.

333 *The walls.* There are two main types of wall construction representing very
342 old building traditions.

[172] 1. The dry stone walls, *fallaí fuara* — met with in the prehistoric buildings, *clocháns* etc. — are built of stones (often flattish) without mortar. Dwelling-houses which have been built with dry stone walls have in later times been covered both inside and outside with mortar, pl. XLIII: 1. The space between the bigger stones are often carefully filled up by small stones, *spallaí.*

Especially in Co. Clare I have admired the precision developed in the construction of the walls.

[172] 2. Of prehistoric origin are also the mud, clod or clay walls, *falla feidín.* A fantastic explanation of the term makes it equal to *falla ar feadh dín,* a wall that endures as long as the roof is kept properly thatched (Dinneen).

The clay was pulverized and made into a thick mortar by wetting it and mixing it with cut rushes or course sprat hay. The well built mud-wall houses form comfortable dwellings and it has happened that people have regretted leaving excellent thatched "mud walls" to live in cold stone-walled slatted dwellings.

342 The foundation of the walls is sometimes a pronunced feature of the house. Whilst the walls usually have a width of 1½, 2 or 3 feet, the foundation is wider, forming a shelf or broad step along the building serving as a pathway to the door. The foundation is sometimes not very dissimilar to some prehistoric house-foundations. In this connection I would like to remark that the pathway and nearest surroundings of the entrance door are sometimes
[171] paved by a mosaic of small cobble-stones from the sea-shore. This I have seen in costal districts in South West, and I suggest that it is the same kind of pavement as appears in Portugal, Madeira, Marocco and elsewhere at the border of the Atlantic And the Mediterranean Sea.

Doors and windows. In many primitive houses of to-day the construction of the door-opening is extremely archaic: flat stones serving as lintel and as threshold. The frame of the door is wooden.

The doors usually have bolts of wood and a hasp to close the door. A thick wooden beam can be placed across inside the door on stormy nights, certain holes in the wall at both sides of the door being made for this beam,

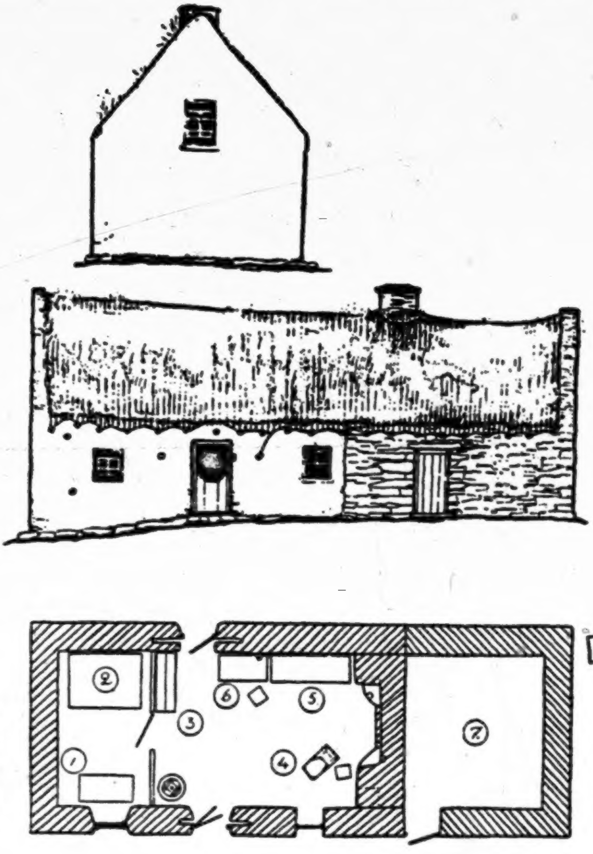


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Fig. 4. Gable-chimney house. Cillrialaig, Co. Kerry. The cattle once in the lower end of the house. Now removed to a house added to the upper gable wall. 1 table, 2 bed, 3 dresser, 4 cradle, 5 bench, 6 table, 7 sowhouse.

fig. 4. In Co. Kerry, Co. Galway and other parts of Ireland, I have been told [171] of rough strong doors of wattles bound together with ropes of *sugáin*. Such a door, the hurdle door, *sgálán fraoigh* or *scalpán,* was more commonly used as a door for cattle sheds. It is found also in Scotland (see e. g. an illustration showing sheilings in Jura (S. W. Scotland) in Pinkertons Voyages and Travels, vol. III, p. 278, London 1809) and it is mentioned in the Ancient Irish laws. About the two opposite doors and the half-doors see p. 217.

In older times a hole in the wall, a looplight, served as window. It was closed [284, 414] at night with a hay-wisp or a wooden shutter, *cómhla,* which was removed by day and secured at night by a stick placed across or by a latch.

342 Windows, as well as chimneys, were taxed, hence the oldfashioned blind
[65] wall and the old fireplace (without chimney) being preserved. The daylight
was admitted to the kitchen by the door opening. A pad of straw was placed
[294] at the door, *sop i mbéal dorais* (Dinneen) on which tailors and other craftsmen used to sit to avoid window-tax. When windows came later on, they
were placed on the side of the house sheltered from the prevailing wind.

The gables. The stone built gables are higher or lower according to the form
of the roof, which is determined by the wind. In some districts of Ireland
[184] especially in the Aran Islands, Connemara, Sligo, Mayo there are often even
in very primitive buildings, step gables or serrated gables. In other parts of
Ireland the gables are straight up to the top. In Southern and Eastern Ireland the gables are generally of this type. Half thatched or hipped gables are
sometimes found in the east, where now and then the thatch is also bent
over the gable edge in the same way as in Wales. This is common on mud
houses.

How the gables protect the ends of the thatched roof and support the horizontal ribs is shown in pl. XLIV: 2.

The roof. Roof and wall constructions meet one another in the most primitive stages, when the house is only a roof over a foundation wall, of a cavity, or when the roof is constructed similarly to the *clocháns* with the upper course of stones slightly overlapping the lower course. This construction is not known among dwelling houses of to-day, but can be found in outhouses, sweating buths etc.

Roofs made by wide slates or stone flags will be seen in some parts of Ireland when there is a natural access to stones suitable for slates as in Co. Clare where such roofs are found on outhouses with the narrow stone walls carrying the flags.

The Irish house from olden times generally has had not a stone roof, but a thatched roof, *ceann tuighe*. The art of making good thatched roofs is now dying out but in earlier times Irishmen had developed great skill in roofing with thatch.

The thatched roof is supported internally by beams joined in pairs forming
[804] the couples, *cúplai*. The couples are placed at a certain distance and the space
enclosed between two couples must be looked upon as a sort of architectural
unit. The length of the house can be measured by the number of couples.
[171] A very similar kind of measuring is well known in Denmark and Skåne. In
many old houses the length of the house seems to indicate traditions from
the ancient Irish laws (See Addy, p. 84).

The roof-supporting system of beams varies very little. The beams can

be more or less primitive. The couples can be constructed in two slightly dif- 342
ferent ways depending on the intended height of the roof. In very windy districts near the sea very low, semi-circular roofs that do not catch much wind are used. The roof is streamlined and there is no comb along the roof, pl. XLV: 2.

This roof is made in the following way. Very strong couples rest on the walls and are joined by two crossbeams, the lower called *faradh* and the upper *maide mullaigh*. These joining beams are just as strong as the couples themselves. They are joined to the couples by means of one or two wooden pegs on each side. The couples never meet. Above this arrangement are the purlins, *taobháin*. Transversally across these are slender laths called *cleitheáin*, pl. XLV: 1.

High roofs with combs are supported by couples joined in pairs and held together at the top by a wooden peg, *pionna*. The ridge beam, *maide droma*, rests on the hollows formed at the junctions of the couples, and parallel to it but lying transversally on the couples are purlins, *tobháin*, on each side of which run the whole length of the roof. To brace the couples there are tiebeams, *maidi snaidhm*, pl. XLIV.

On this foundation of roofing, sticks are spread tough sods of grass, the [824]
earthen side inwards. The sods cut from the ground can either be made about 5 ft. long and 2 ft. wide or a bit longer than the side of the roof and about 3 ft. broad. In the former case the sods overlap, the higher over the lower. In the latter case the sods stretch from the wall to the ridge and are bent over the ridge. Over the ridge then there are two layers of sods. In [184]
both cases the one row of sods overlaps the second row beside it. I have found the short sods used in Southern Ireland, and the long ones in Donegal.

The thatch is put on in two ways. One method of thatching corresponds 342
to the thatched houses of the European continent viz: the scollop-thatching 824
or rod-thatching, pl. XLVI: 2. The other method is the hay-rope or *sugán* thatching known from the border of the North Atlantic and the North Sea. The scollop-thatching is made in such a way that straw, *tuighe*, or mountain grass, *fineán*, is fastened to the sods by means of horizontal rows of rods, *scolb*. The rods are fastened to the underlying sods by twigs, *bannai*. Both *scolb* and *bannai* are of hazel or sally. Oat, wheat, or barley straw is used for thatching but on the western seabord rye straw is used. Rye is considered most durable. According to scollop-thatching the thatching of the ridge is of certain interest. Here and round the chimney-shaft but seldom at the 342
thatch of eaves, *bun tsop*, a kind of ornament can be formed by the twigs and scollops. But this is an ornament caused by the necessity of fastening and

342 trimming the thatch. When using the *sugán* or hay-rope method the straw, bound in large bunches, is placed on the roof in rows, each 'set' about 18" wide. The thatcher beginning from below takes a handful of straw and puts the top part of the straw against the roof. He then puts another handful slightly above the last, so that the handfuls lie on top of each other. The bottom part of the handful is spread and flattened out with hands. Then the
342 ropes are put on. A man stays on a ladder at each gable of the house, pl.
284 XLVI: 1. Another man carries the rope along the roof by means of a hay-fork while another walks beside him loosening the ball of ropes. The first rope is put on along the eave, the next above until the top of the house is reached. The ropes are fastened along the gables by means of stone plugs. Then the vertical ropes are put on, and fixed to the front and back walls of the house, also by stone plugs. The two systems of ropes can also be intertwined with each other, so that the ropes form a kind of unintentional ornamentation. Other means of fastening the ropes are by weighting the vertical ropes with stones attached to the ends. The stones are placed in two different ways, (1) hanging below the eave of the house, this is the most primitive way, (2) laying the stones on the roof just above the eave to press down the thatch at the same time as they hold the ropes. The rows of stones when finally laid give a good finish. This is also an example of unintentional ornamentation. It is worth noticing that the hay cocks too may be fastened in nearly the same three ways by means of hay ropes.

342 In order to produce hay-ropes used for binding the thatch and the hay cocks etc. a multitude of simple tools has been invented, pl. XLVII: 2.

To sum up some conclusions about thatching and roof, it seems clear to me that two, perhaps related, but nevertheless unlike traditions have been at work here, namely the scollop thatching, with the highly elevated roof resting on couples that meet each other, on the one hand, and on the other hand hay rope thatching, with the hay ropes fastened to stones, and often a low roof without perceptible ridge resting on a couple construction, where the couples do not join. Parallels to the former tradition are to be found on the European continent and the latter are mainly found, as far as I know, along the coast of the Atlantic and the North Sea.

I must add that the well-built thatched roof is at the same time a masterpiece of technical ability and a feat of artistic skill. The best Irish thatching give the finest peasant roof in Europe. It is unfortunately, however, very expensive and demands constant attention to keep it in good repair so it is very often replaced by a cheap, shoddy roof of foreign origin.

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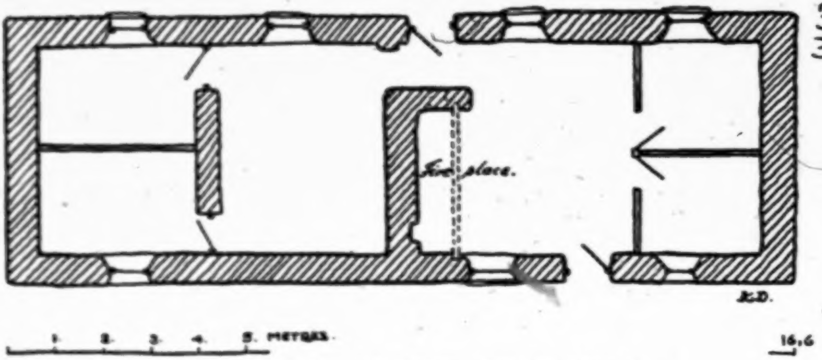

Fig. 5. Entrance-door and fireplace. Cush, Co. Limerick.

The fireplace and the chimney.

Slowly, step by step, or suddenly, by an abrupt innovation the fireplace has developed from its simplest original form, i. e. the placing of the fire directly on the flagstones of the floor. I have never found a fire lying quite free on the floor in Ireland, although I have heard of such fires where one could go round the fire. From Tousist, Co. Kerry, I have heard of houses which had the fire in the centre of the floor, and a casing, *simné,* of woven twigs, *slata fighe,* over it to convey the smoke out through the opening in the centre of the roof. This arrangement has been obsolete here for upwards of 80 years.

In both central-chimney houses and gable-chimney houses of recent time there is always a wall at the back of the firehob. This wall constitutes the endwall, *pinniuir,*[*] of the kitchen in gable-chimney houses. In more newly built central-chimney houses this wall reaches the top of the roof as the stonebuilt chimney is joined to it, but in old central chimney houses it only reaches the same height as the side walls.

The hearth, *teinteán,* is usually at floor level in many parts of Ireland. There is a great variety of hearth-stones: large flags of stone, small cobblestones from the seashore etc. Even round the hearth or fire-place there is a pavement owing to the oldfashioned way of using the fire for cooking. Bits of fire are taken from the fire, and put on the floor round the fire-place, for instance when they are baking in the bastible, and at the same time cooking, or when they wish to leave the tea drawing. Sometimes there can be two or three small fires at the same time round the hearth.

The fireplace thus represents the pure hearth-type, being in direct contrast

342 to the Middle and especially East European fireplace traditions, which are
354 dominated by the stonebuilt oven. The built-in oven is unfamiliar and unknown to the Irish fireplace, and the Irish types of bread. For baking,
252 which is done every day in Ireland, special utensils, representing very old
354 and original traditions, are used. For baking the griddle bread, *arán greadaille,* the griddle or grid iron, *greadall,* is used. The griddle rests on the tripod, *teannta* or *crann aráin.* In Northern Ireland, bread irons are used, which are not put on the tripod over the fire, but the cake is placed in an upright position supported by the bread iron which is placed before the fire. Very primitive is the method to lean the cake against the bread-stick, *crothnán* or *maide aráin,* which is only a wooden twig of three branches or a three forked root. In Ancient Ireland according to O'Curry (op. cit. vol. I, p. CCCLXIII) the wheatmeal and barley cakes were baked on a griddle, but the oatmeal cakes called *bkocaire* or *blethach* were always baked in upright position before the fire by means of the threepronged fork or stick called *maide an bkocaire* or the *cranachan.*

There is also another certainly old Irish method of bread baking i. e. in
[077] the bastible, *bácús.* When metal stores however are found in peasant houses, they are definitely a late cultural loan from England.

342 Standing at the back of the hearth is one large, thickish flag or often three
354 or more stones forming the hob, *iarta.* In very primitive dwellings I have seen only a couple of rough stones used as hobstones, *leac iarta.* In districts where mud-houses are common a mass or boss of clay behind the fireplace makes up the hob. The pot, *corcán,* or kettle, *citeal,* rests against the hob or hobstones when on the fire. The hob constitutes a protection even for the wall behind.

In Eastern and Southern Ireland and even elsewhere the hob is built up carefully from stone and mortar. An ash corner will be found at the sides of the hob.

In the very primitive stage there is no chimney at all, the smoke finding its way out through the door or a hole in the roof. As I have already mentioned, there can be two smoke holes, one at each gable end of the roof. This is a stage of the black houses very seldom seen in Ireland to day.

At the next stage a kind of basket or wooden chimney is hung over the fire to create a draught, *tarrac,* and to lead the smoke out through the hole in the roof. When there is no chimney but even later, when the chimney has come, to regulate the circulation of air in the kitchen, is is necessary to open and close one of the doors to allow for the changing winds. In the Irish houses the woman who looks after the fire always takes the "wind door" and

2: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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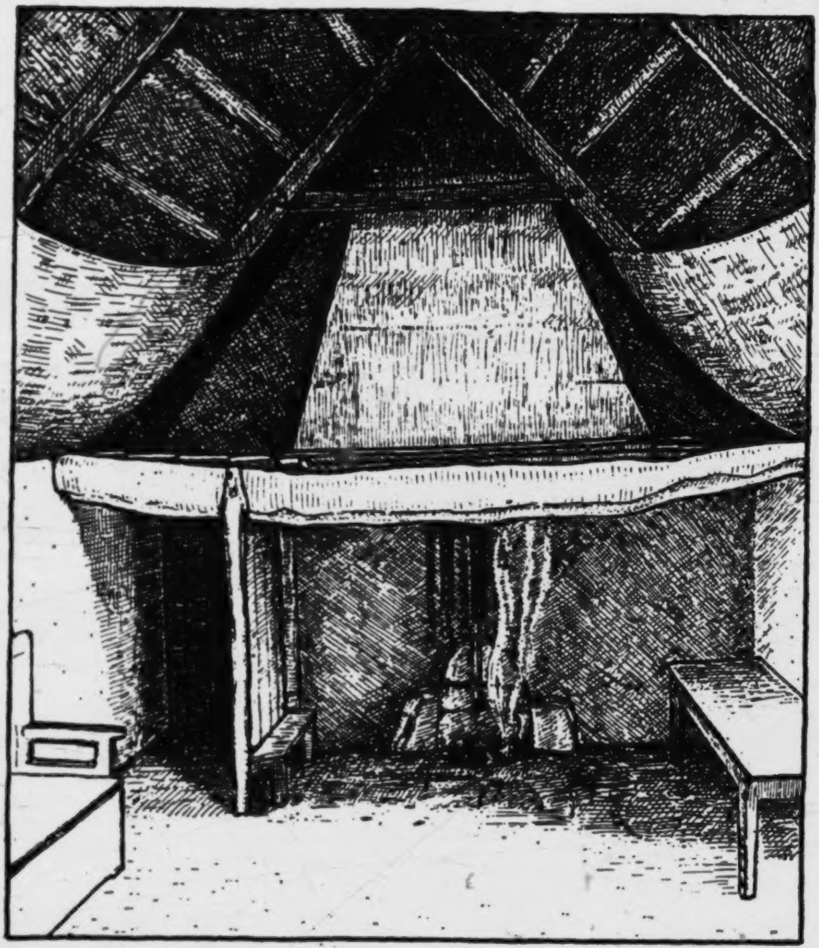

Fig. 6. Wooden side-wall of the fireplace. The kitchen corner. Kyle, Ballinglen, Co. Wicklow.

the "shelter door" into consideration, the whole kitchen being of importance with regard to the fire.

The basket chimney, *sineán,* is plastered with clay inside and outside to resist sparks from the fire. A plaster mixture of clay and calfmanure is said [237] to be very useful. The older chimneys were straight i. e. on looking up from the fireplace the sky was visible above. In later ones the flue, *poll an deataigh,*

● 342 354 is bent from side to side to create more draught. The chimney narrowed gradually upwards until the basket, *cis,* on top was reached. In old houses the chimney was not always capped by the basket-like contraption on the outside, for instance not in coastal districts in the North, pl. XLV: 2. The external chimney however is a noteworthy detail. It was now and then of woven rods of twig or willow and it was thatched in some parts of Ireland, pl. XLVII: 1. In other old houses pieces of board were placed on edge in square formation.

The external chimney is sometimes lacking even if there is an inside chimney. In Donegal in places exposed to the wind, I have seen this even in houses with a stonebuilt chimney.

The basket or wooden chimney is supported by two wooden beams resting on the side walls, sometimes however projecting from the gable wall, pl. XLVII: 3. In a later stage there are two pillar walls or hobwalls carrying the basket chimney.

Across the chimney (inside) halfway up or more, a stick of cut treebranch projects across the chimney. This stick is supporting the chimneyrack or pot-rack, hanger, *drol,* which is an iron bar and hangs down to the firelevel:. Another way of hanging pots over the fire is to use the crane, *croch,* a hooked bar of wood (in older times) or iron. Usually the hangers and the crane are combined and in fact there are many hangers hanging at the same time from the crane. Now and then a chain is used as a hanger.

[352] At the side of the fireplace there is a stool, *stól,* or a number of stools, often varying a little in size, but usually very low. Primitive is the block of wood, *bloc,* a section of a tree, used as a stool. This I have seen in chimneycorners in Co. Kerry. There the round stool of coiled hay-ropes, *suidhistín,* also will be found.

The hob or protection wall behind the fire can develop in such a way that it incorporates the two stools at both sides of the fire, so that there will be two stone-built seats.

Also the pier of the fireplace will be built by pilasters on both sides forming a stonebreast, *piléar an teinteáin,* on which the wattled or wooden chimney rests.

[352] In the pier, as well as in the stone wall behind the fireplace, in the hob, and underneath the stone-seats, there are small closets or holes used to keep utensils. In Donegal, I have seen a hole in the wall at each side of the fire, the one hole for the woman's snuffbox and knitting, the other exclusively for the man's pipe.

In later times the chimney is often built of stone and when at last the pier

or breast, the seats, and the chimney are built of stone, and joined together, 342
the common modern type of Irish fireplace emerges. It can however take on 354
a slightly different form in different parts of Ireland, for instance in Done- [184]
gal one finds a carved breast and in Southern Ireland it stands straight up
at right angles to the floor.

Only the hearth itself has still another stage to pass through in some parts of Ireland. The hearth will be built so that the fire rests in a grate, in late times much elevated and supplied with iron bars. Below is a place for the ashes. This iron grate owes its origin to the fact that in different parts of Ireland, other fuel such as coal was substituted for turf, pl. XLVIII: 1.

To the coal fireplace often belongs the bellows which can be made in different ways such as the hand bellows and the whealbellows. These iron grates and bellows can be found in such forms in Welsh and English houses.

The hearth from the earliest times forms the centre of family activity in 592
Ireland. Here is the rallying point of the people. The fireplace has attracted 354
to itself the seating places of the house, and in earlier times even the sleeping places. The place of honour is the corner seat near the fire, where the guests are invited to sit down. The stone-built seats or the small wooden stools placed at the side of the fire in primitive Irish dwellings are probably the predecessors of the comfortable armchairs found at every West European fireplace, in palace or cottage, where the same tradition of social activity is attached to the fire seats. From the many folk-beliefs connected with the
fire and the fireplace, I only notice that in the South of Ireland, on All [775]
Hallow Eve, the fire is not allowed to go out and food is placed on the floor for the dead people who are expected to visit the house. This custom seems
to indicate that in ancient times the places for eating were in front of the [171]
fireplace. In Scandinavia the food for the dead people is placed on the table.

The Cailleach.

From the northern coast of Donegal to Galway bay, but not south of it, [184]
I have found the projection outwards with the bed, *cailleach*. The outshot 352
with the *cailleach* is ordinarily put at one side of the fireplace. In a district 171
between Tuam, Co. Galway, and Tubercurry, Co. Sligo, I have found a richly developed *cailleach* tradition. In many townlands nearly every house is fitted with a *cailleach*, and it is not un-common to find a *cailleach* beside the fireplace in the kitchen, continued by a *cailleach* put to the bedroom behind the fireplace. This *cailleach* connects the houses of central and northern Ireland with the primitive houses of Scotland, ***both*** and ***tigh dubh***, where the in-

The clochán type with domed roof.

172 342 The clochán, or stone bee-hive hut, no doubt represents a very old stage of house-tradition (pl. 29,a—32), although it can be studied from material still existing and, in some cases, still in use in Ireland today (pl. 33, a, b). As it represents a prehistoric type of building, investigations of the Irish clochán and other types of bee-hive, oval or oblong houses from the Iron Age and later times become of immediate interest for the study of recent Irish house-traditions.

A comparison between the common Irish (developed) houses of today and the clocháns (prehistoric or of later date) may give the impression that there is a gap between them that cannot be bridged. Nevertheless the clochán-type constitutes a very suitable starting point for discussion of the recent Irish peasant houses and their history. There are indeed some significant parallels from various countries and different periods, which help to illuminate the problem here in question. In particular I would like to draw [171] attention to the Scottish bee-hive house but also to the black house *(bothán, aridhean, tigh dubh),* to the remains of circular and roughly oblong huts of stone in other parts of the Brittish Isles, *e. g.* in Carnarvon, Wales, and to the very similar settlements in Spain and Portugal,[3] and in Italy and Greece. In Scandinavia, such settlements and forts as have been excavated in Denmark, Norway and the Swedish provinces of Öland and Gotland must be considered as parallels to the West European material here mentioned.

Descriptions of Irish clocháns can be found in several archæological works. I quote here some descriptions given by Macalister:[4]

"A clochán was built in this manner. A space of the size and shape intended was marked out on the ground with loose stones. Usually the plan was circular or oval, but sometimes the building is circular outside and square within. Above these stones another course was laid, slightly oversailing the course below. A third course overhung the second, and so on; the walls being made thick enough, as they rose, to secure stability. At last the sides of the building approximated together so that the hole in the top of the chamber could be closed with a single flag-stone or with two or more such stones. No mortar of any kind was needed or used, though the outer surface may have been covered with sods or some protection to keep out the rain. As a rule the stones of which the building was composed were laid not quite horizontal, but were sloped outward, so as to shed off rain-water to the outside of the building."

The most famous remains of clocháns are perhaps the six bee-hive cells at

[TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P. 177 --- Analyst]

PLATE 29.

a. Clochán (beehive hut). Fahan, Dingle, Co. Kerry. Note to the left in back-ground a very large clochán which has collapsed. The remains of several other collapsed clocháns are inside same *caiseal*, (circular wall enclosing a group of buildings, huts, etc.).

b. Clocháns inside a cashel. Fahan, Dingle, Co. Kerry.

a

b

[p. 175]

[captions on p. 174]

PLATE 30

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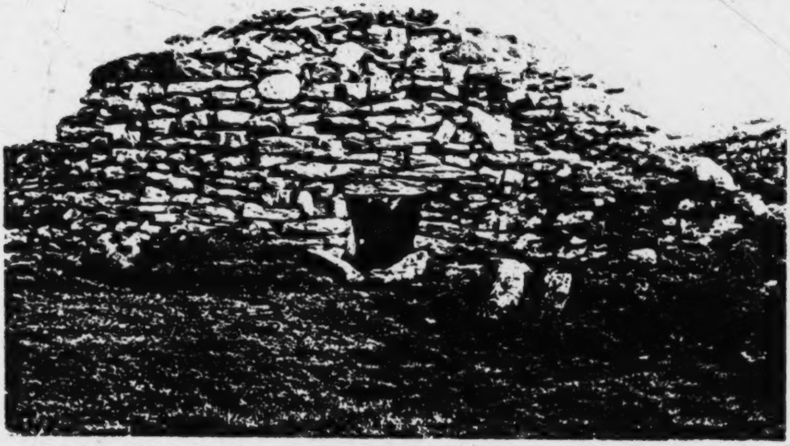
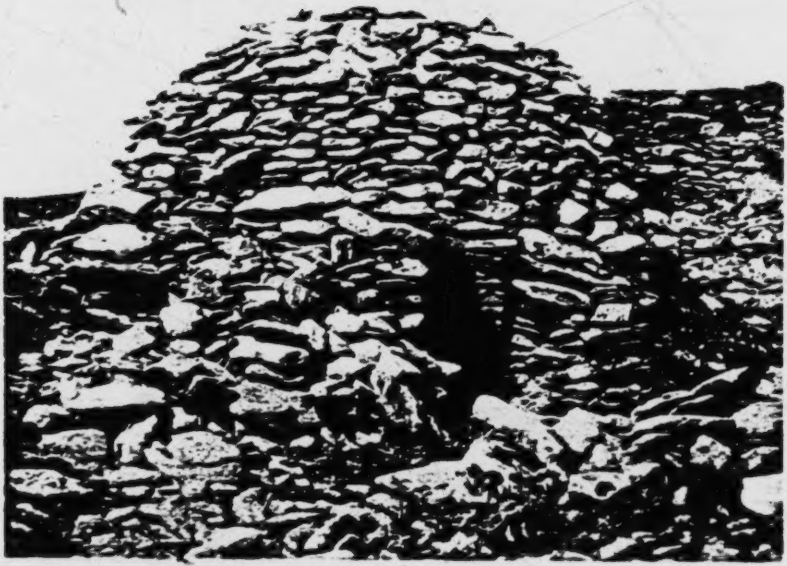

a


b

[p. 176]
[captions on p. 177]

172 342 Skellig Michael, Co. Kerry, and the so called "City of Fahan", which probably includes the largest number of buildings of this kind (pl. 29, 30,b).[5] But no investigation has been made — as far as I know — of round stone huts in Ireland built and inhabited in later times. Such investigation has, however, been made on the Scottish Islands by F. L. W. Thomas.[6] It is evident that the bee-hive huts (*both*) of Lewis described by Thomas, are very close to or identical with the Irish clochāns, and represent the same building traditions. This also agrees with the accounts of Irish cabins in the literature.[7] I will confine myself here to two descriptions made by Thomas and published in 1860 and in 1869, both dealing with stone bee-hive huts built in late times and used as dwellings. As these descriptions are inaccessible to most readers I must quote them at some length.

342 171 The normal and, Thomas presumes, most modern form of bee-hive house (in the middle of the 19th century) is "an irregular circle, six or seven feet in diameter, the walls rising perpendicularly for three feet; each successive course of stone then overlaps or projects beyond the one below, and then the roof gradually closes in and takes a beehive form. — — — A hole, called the *Farlos (farleus,* a skylight), is left in the apex of the roof for the escape of the smoke, and is closed with a turf or flat stone as requisite. (See pl. 34,c). There are two doors, 2½ feet high and 2 feet broad, and they are placed so that a line joining them cuts off on one side about two thirds of the enclosed area. The two doors are a decided improvement, for that one upon the side on which the wind blows — that is, the weather door — is closed with a stone or turf, while the lee one is left open, and a gentle draught carries the smoke serenely above the head of the inhabitants and through the Farlos. From door to door a row of flat stones, a few inches in height, forms the bench or seat, *being*, and behind this the area is filled up with hay or rushes for a bed. I had a native estimate of its capacity, and found it calculated to hold three people. In front of the bench, and midway between the two doors, is the fire — of peat of course, and not much needed except for cooking. Above the fire, a longish stone draws in and out of the wall for the purpose of hanging a pot on, and in nearly every ruin did we find this primitive instrument in its place, shoved back into the wall."[8]

With the investigations made by Thomas in 1857 and later, the *clochán* as an inhabited living dwelling is brought within the horizon of the study of today. In the following example which is taken from Thomas' description, this house-type of a prehistoric time is allied with a late innovation, namely the stone-built chimney, which in the course of the 19th century seems to

PLATE 30.

a. Clochán na Carraighe. Inishmore, Aran Islands, Co. Galway.

b. Clochán. Fahan, Co. Kerry.

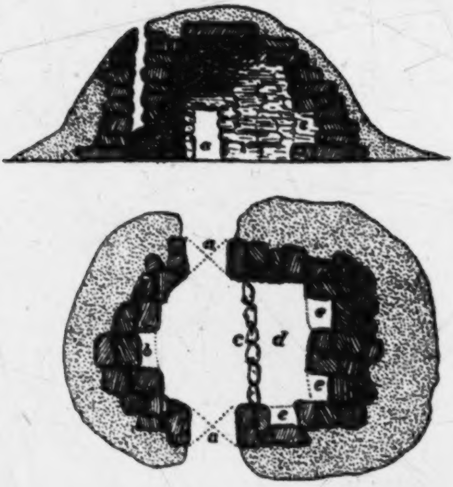


Fig. 1. A both or clochán on Cnoc Dubh, at Ceann Thulabhig, Uig, Lewis. From Thomas. A, a, doors; b, fire-place; c, a row of stones in front of the bed place; d, the bed; e, e, e, small recesses in the wall to serve for cupboards.

become more and more common even in the dwellings of this remote district, thus heralding the total replacement of the black-houses by the white-houses with stone-built chimneys at the gable walls. With regard to the arrangement for the fire, this clochán stands on the same level of development as the many houses or huts of this and later times, the roof of which has been broken through by the stone-built chimney.

The *bo'h (both)* or *clochán* on Cnoc Dubh, at Ceann Thulabhig, Uig, Lewis, fig. 1, is the most modern that Thomas has seen — "and at the same time the last, in all probability, that will be constructed in this manner." It is of bee-hive form, about 18 feet in diameter, 9 feet high, and roofed by the horizontal or cyclopean arch, *i. e.* by a system of overlapping stones. The outside is covered with green turf. There are two doors (fig. 1 a,a) opposite to each other, higher (3 feet) and better formed than is usual. Within, the chamber is dome-shaped and is between 7 and 8 feet square on the floor. A row of stones (c), half a foot in height, cuts off one half of the floor for a bed (d). There are several small recesses (e, e, e) in the wall to serve for cupboards. But what distinguishes this *bo'h* from all others is the presence of a chimney over the fireplace (b). Thomas concludes, from what he heard from the woman who was living in it in 1867, and from va-

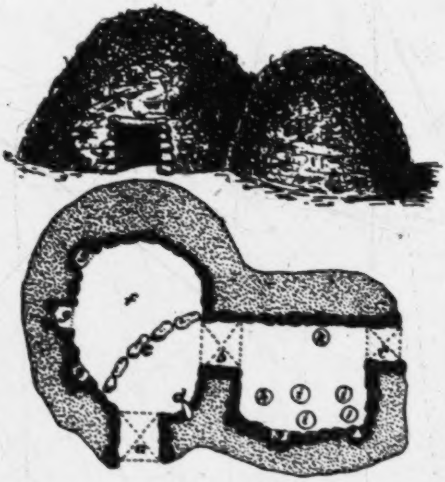


Fig. 2. A double both, the garry or summer pasturage of the tenants of Corlista. Uig. Lewis. From Thomas. A, b, c, doorways; d, fire-place; e, row of stones in front of the bed-place; f, the bed; g, g, niches; h, cream tub; i, i, i, three milk or cheese tubs, covered by slaty stones; j, a churn; k, a stoop for carrying water.

rious circumstances, that this *bo'h* was made about ninety years ago (from 1867).

With regard to Thomas's own comparisons, I will only add here that he has made a rather daring comparison between the *both* of Lewis and the Eskimo domed-shaped hut of Greenland. But perhaps a comparison of the grouping of the houses would be more effective than a comparison of the house construction of each type.[14] The Greenland hypothesis, however, seems to me to be worth studying. But at the same time we must not lose sight of stone-built huts and huts of straw, sods, mud and wickerwork, round or oval in form, used especially by cattle-breeding peoples in the Iberian Peninsula (*e. g.* in Estremadura, Andalusia, Granada), Italy and elsewhere.

Bee-hive houses of the *clochán* type in Ireland of today are to be found in some parts of the Gaeltacht (the Gaelic-speaking districts of Ireland), as on the coast and islands from Kerry to Mayo. There the stone-built bee- 343
hive houses are used — not as dwellings, so far as I know — but as milk-houses or for storing turf etc. In the Dingle peninsula, Co. Kerry, bee-hive houses are still being built as outhouses. There are also modernised clocháns with wooden doors — they can even have a glass ball to decorate the top.

The only stone-built and stone-roofed houses equipped with a fireplace and

343 a smokehole which I have found, was an ancient sweating bath, *teach allais,* in Co. Mayo. This building is square in form.

171 Thomas's material is however interesting from a certain point of view. From prehistoric times are found agglomerations of round, oblong and square houses in Ireland (*e. g.* Skellig-Michael), in Wales[9] and in other parts of the 341 British Isles. The same mixture of round and square or oblong buildings can be observed in Portugal,[10] Spain and elsewhere in Western and Southern Europe.

From Thomas's material we now learn what an *inhabited* settlement of this kind looks like. In Lewis, for example, the stone-roofed circular houses, *bothan,* have been erected in the same *gearraidhean, i. e.* place for booleying, as the timber-roofed huts, *aridhean.*[11] We are forced to infer that round, oval, oblong, square buildings must be studied with regard to each other and with regard to different constructions in timber, branches, sods, stone etc.

The *oblong form* of building can obviously have developed or been invented in a number of ways, as there are varying antecedent conditions in different cases.[12] There is however *one* oval or oblong form of building which may have its origin in the stone-built domed-roofed bee-hive house.

The construction with a domed roof does not permit of much widening of the space between the walls. Even if very long and suitable flag-stones are at hand, the limits for the cyclopean arch will make it impossible for the primitive builder to enlarge the circumference of his house to any great degree. To get more room he must put two or more circular bee-hive buildings together, or he must go over to the oval or oblong form. Thomas himself touches upon the problem in these words: "It is evident that in this style of architecture (domed roofed buildings) the size of the rooms is limited by the nature of the stone; and although a tolerably safe roof may be made in this manner with rough moor-stones to cover an area of six feet it would have a most uncomfortable and suspicious appearance if extended over twice those dimensions (six or seven feet in diameter). Even in the Orkneys where is abundance of flag stone, although there are chambers there forty-five feet long the breadth was only five feet."

342 To elucidate this important problem the Irish oval *clochán* offers us the most valuable material. I refer to the series of photographs, kindly placed at my dispoal by the distinguished author of The Islands of Ireland, Thomas Mason.[13] This *clochán* (Clochán na Carraighe, Inishmore Island, Aran, Co. Galway, pl 30 a, 31, and 32) is of oval shape, the entrance door being at the long sidewall. The roof is made of overlapping stones, one row of large slabs coveing the space between the two long sides of the roof, which are

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3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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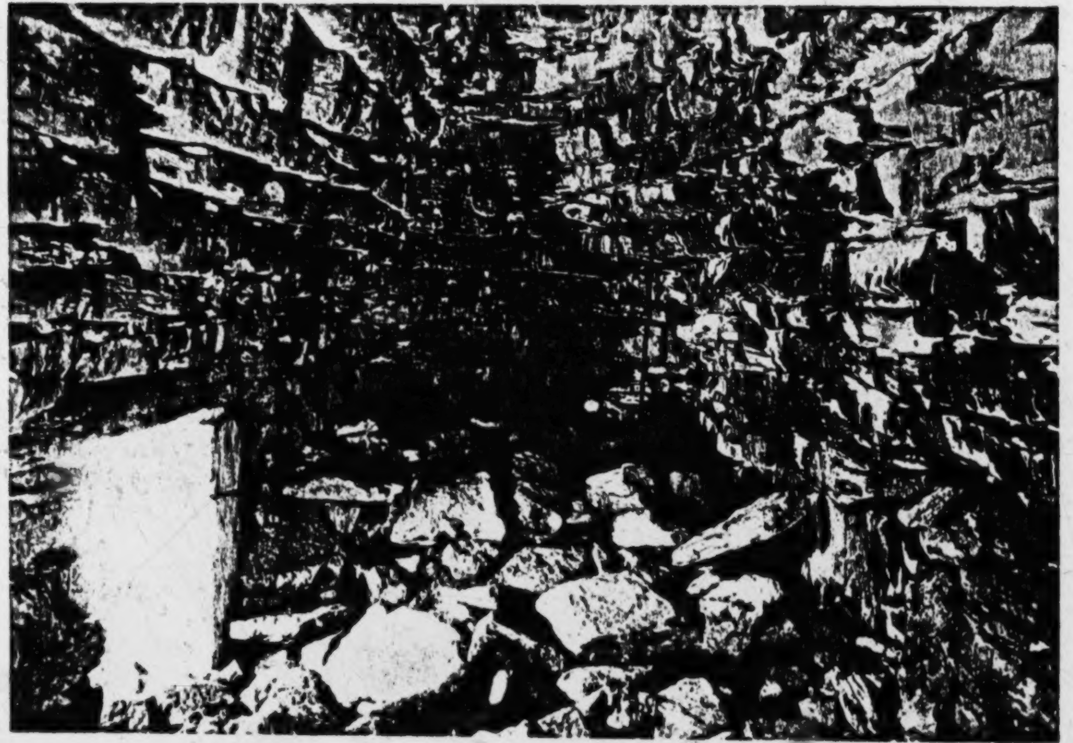
PLATE 31



Clochán na Carraighe, Inishmore, Aran Islands, Co. Galway.

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3: Campbell B.E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

County Galway

PLATE 32

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Clochán na Carraighe, Inishmore, Aran Islands, Co. Galway.

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[17]

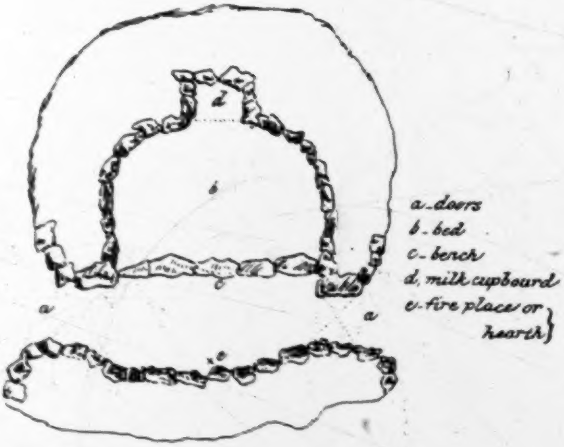

Fig. 3. Both, on West side of Loch an ath Ruadh. Uig, Lewis. From Thomas.

joined together in this manner (pl. 32, an interior showing roof formation. Camera was placed on the ground pointing upwards).

Primitive dwellings and hypogea of the Scottish isles also show the same arrangements. Thus it seems to be evident that the study of the oblong houses there (black-houses, *tigh dubh)* cannot be separated from the study of the *clochán* type. In consequence, it also will be necessary to compare the so-called Norse building customs in the Scottish Isles, which have been put forward by Aage Roussell,[12] not only with Thomas's black-house material — as Roussell does — but also with Thomas's other material including the stone-roofed houses. [12]

Stone built timber-roofed oval houses.

If my working hypothesis holds, a thorough study of the oval houses will throw much light on Irish building traditions. At least in some parts of Ireland the oval houses formed the basis for the development of native houses of today, *e. g.* the one-roomed central-chimney houses with thatched gables.

It is evident that oval house-types can easily have been reached in places where the round or oval clochán as well as the hut with thatched roof resting on timber are known. When suitable large slabs were scarce, the primi-

County Galway

342 tive builder has replaced the doomed roof by the thatched roof if, naturally, timber and material for thatching were at hand.

A great number of houses of this type have been in use as late as the 19th century in remote parts of Ireland. Many references are given in the travel sketches and other literature of that time.

Particular attention may be called to the houses in Achill, Co. Galway, which belong to booleying settlements.

Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall, describing the island of Achill[14a] tell us about a certain kind of booleying (the cattle were brought down towards the coast when the season for fishing was on). They sketch the houses in a picture, pl. 34,a, and in words:

"The habitations of the islanders are very singular. Their houses are heaps of rude stones moulded by the tide, procured from the beach, uncemented; they are rounded at the gables, and roofed with fern, heath, and shingles, fastened on by straw bands. In the village of Dooagha, consisting
[556] of about forty cabins, there is not a single chimney. Some of the wealthier graziers, however, have an odd custom of residing in such houses, or in hou-
[221] ses of a still more simple construction, only during the summer months, when
[231] the season for fishing is "on", and their cattle are brought down towards the coast to feed on the young herbage. These hovels, they call 'Builly houses'."

From another traveller, Caesar Otway, who made a short excursion in Achill in the summer 1838, can be collected some valuable informations.[15] Otway mentions (p. 353, 356) a certain type of wall construction, viz, the pilledpin double wall: two dry stone walls with the interspace filled in with sand. This is the same archaic construction, which Thomas describes from Lewis. It is also known from archaeological excavations in Scandinavia and elsewhere.

342
361 "An Achill village consisted of congeries of hovels thrown indiscriminately together, as if they fell in a shower from the sky, and their construction was as follows: — a dry stone wall was built of a form like an obtuse oval, for they had not arrived at the art of making a square quoin, or erecting a gable end. Outside this wall, and at about a foot distance, another loose wall was run up, and the space between the two filled with sea sand, and then this was roofed, generally with timber washed on shore from wrecks, and covered with heath, which covering did not reach over the outside wall, and form an eave, but rested on the middle between the walls, and the moisture from above passed, as it should, through the intervening sand."

"— — — we entered the village of Dugurth. Just such a village as I

County Galway

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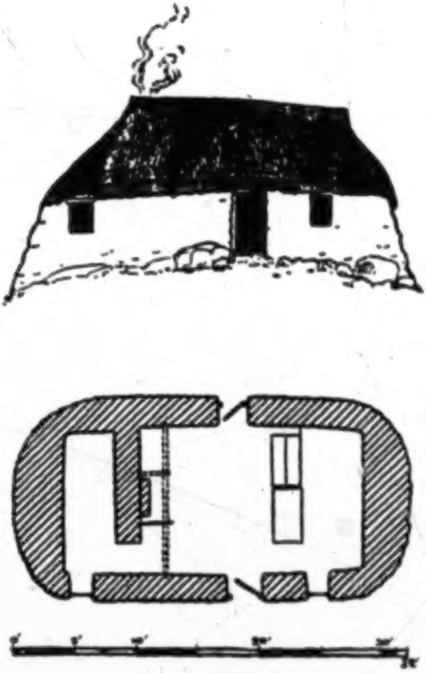

Fig. 4. Oval house. Inveran, Co. Galway.

have above described, but certainly containing some houses that *had* gable-ends; but for the most part of the construction I have alluded to, a dirty, dreary, uncouth place — — —." 342 361 221

Later on (p. 401) Otway has learnt to know the summerherding (booleying) and the difference between winterhouses and summerhouses, and he compares the Irish summerhouses with the Swiss *chalets*.

"Keem, I said, was a singular village; it is only inhabited in summer — who would suppose that the Achillians had such a superfluity of houses, that they had both their winter and summer residences. The Greenlanders and Esquimaux are so changeful, from their excessive vicissitudes of heat and cold — but here I was surprised to find empty every house but two (and these were the residences of the coast-guard), all with their doors fastened

COUNTY GALWAY

● 342 361 221 and untenanted; and certainly such miserable wigwams, I had never before seen — all built, as I have already described, without gable-ends. It seems the owners of the village of Keem, and the renters of the adjoining district, have other houses in a distant part of the island, where they spend the winter and spring; thence they come when their oats and potatoes are planted and spend the summer months, herding their cattle on these heights, and leading a pastoral life. Thus in Switzerland they have their chalets on the hills, and in old times in Ireland the creaghts (as they were called) had their boolies on the mountains; but I don't think I ever saw a summer-herding village before."

342 What is said to have been the last oval house in Achill (pl. 33,a), was destroyed in the last two years. An old man (he is seen in the doorway) had lived in it and would not change to any other kind of residence. When he died, the house was pulled down.

This house had dry stone walls. In the middle of the floor stood a beam of bog fir from the top of which beams and branches, also of bog fir, spread out like the ribs of an umbrella, to carry the thatched roof. (This central beam may have been a temporary structure? Cf. p. 192 about the *tuireadh* of the wickerwork house described by O'Curry). The house had no windows and no chimney. The smoke came out through a hole in the roof.

In the year 1936, I measured an inhabited oval house in Inveran, Co. Galway, fig. 4 and pl. 34, b, 35, a, b. This house embodies many interesting features known from prehistoric times. It is built upon very uneven ground and runs from east to west. The several feet thick walls slope as the walls of the oval clochán from the ground upwards. In later times these, built as dry stone walls, have been plastered from outside and whitelimed and the windows added.

The interior is made up by one room, which, however, is divided up to the west by the hob and a protecting wall behind it. Here is the bedroom, in harmony with the wide-spread old tradition mentioned in my former article.[103] To the east, a dresser and a table cut off the lower part to form another bed-alcove.

The house has no outside chimney, but a basket resting on beams leads the smoke out through a hole in the roof. This basket is wattled from osiers and covered with plaster. As the wall behind the fireplace does not go up as far as the roof, canvas is hung to complete the wall.

There are the usual two doors, central and opposite to each other.[104] The roof of straw, scollop-thatched, rests on couples of beams, supported on the

[TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P. 189 --- ANALYST]

PLATE 33.

a. Oval house. Keel, Achill, Co. Mayo. Photographed in 1903.

b. Clochán, used for storage purpose. Blasket Island.

County Mayo

PLATE 33

● 342

a

343

b

[captions on p. 186]

PLATE 34

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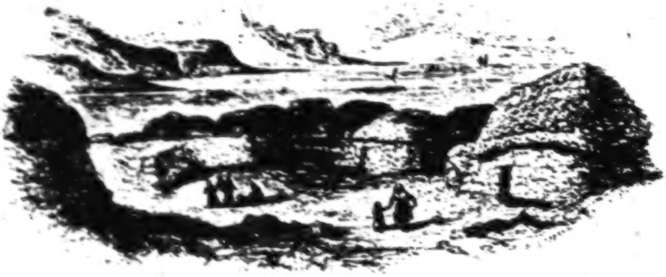

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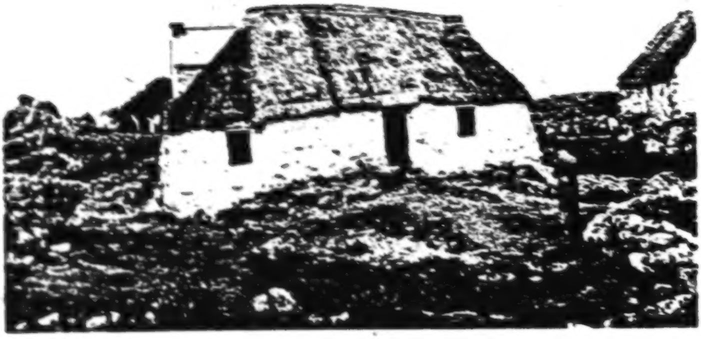

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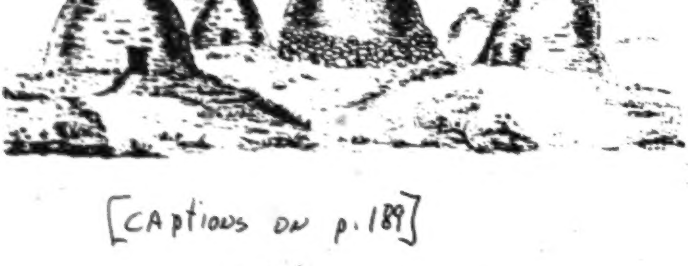

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[CAptions on p. 189]

COUNTY GALWAY

342 inner edge of the walls. As the oval house form does not permit any stone-built gables the roof has rounded and thatched gables.

The house as it now stands as a still inhabited homestead constitutes a good example of the stone-built, timber-roofed, oval house, wellknown from the early part of the 19th century. This house can, no doubt, be classified as a link or a cross between the prehistoric oval clochán and the primitive central-chimney house of later times. Thus, if my theory holds, there is no gap, from the point of view of classification, in the Irish house-tradition, as far as the central-chimney house is concerned.

Huts of wicker-work; sods, turf.

Although the material here concerned may often seem to be of a very indefinite character, from which only a few certain conclusions can be drawn (see p. 173), it is nevertheless necessary to study thoroughly every kind of primitive hut. The many references to Irish building-culture given in the old literature, indicate the very interesting fact that it was the wickerwork huts and other houses built of various materials, and not the stone-built *clochans* that may have been very common as small dwellings in olden times.

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171 During my rather short visits to Ireland, I have not come across any huts of such a kind as wicker-houses, oak-houses, *tech darach* etc., as are described by Eugene O'Curry[15] and by him compared with the Gaulish wicker-houses shown on the Column of Antonius. But inquiries along this line may show that such houses did exist in Ireland not so long ago. Certainly I have got some reports about booleying practised *e. g.* in Donegal up to ninety years ago. The people took their cattle to the mountains in the summer and there they erected huts, *bothogai*, for themselves. But how were these huts constructed? It is probable that they, at least somewhere in Ireland, have been made in a fashion similar to the creel houses in the Scottish Highlands of the same period. I will give some references from Scottish authors, mentioned by Thomas.[16]

According to Walker's Economical History of the Hebrides,[17] the farmers in most Highlands had their homesteads on the arable land, where they dwelt in what are called the winter houses. Soon after the middle of June, when the arable land was sown, they moved with their cattle to a mountainous place belonging to the farm. There they quickly erected or repaired their summer houses which were composed chiefly of sods and branches of trees. "Where wood is at hand, they erect what are called creel houses.

PLATE 34.

a. Houses in Achill, Co. Galway. From Ireland, its Scenery, Character etc., by Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall.

b. Oval house. Inveran, Co. Galway.

c. Beehive houses. Uig, Lewis, Hebrides. Inhabited 1859. After F.W.L. Thomas.

342 171 These are formed of wooden posts, interlaced with branches of trees, like wicker-work, and covered on the outside with turf."

Robertson[11] describes a type of tenant's house, the construction of which must be like the wicker-work houses above-mentioned. "When such a house is to be built, the first thing done is to construct a coarse frame of wood, corresponding to the dimensions of the house, in length and breadth; then upon this frame to fix standards inclining inward, at proper distances, which rise to the height of the intended wall, and are kept in a firm position by being morticed in a tree above of the same dimensions with the tree below. These standards are closely woven with wicker work, to keep the sods from falling in; which, being built on the outside, finish the side walls of a creel-house."

342 221 As the Irish booleying custom, *buaile*, doubtless preserved many primitive and archaic building traditions, it should form an important subject of study also with regard to wicker-work huts. However, the summer huts which are mentioned in the Welsh laws are not referred to in the Irish lawtracts. Professor Mac Néill has kindly informed me that this does not mean that the *buaile* custom did not exist in ancient Ireland. "It was probably practised by the less opulent class who had a limited supply of pasture land. The laws have little to say about these, as in general they were under the jurisdiction of a noble."

342 343 The huts erected in later times of sods or turf and used as shelters for donkeys, pigs, etc., which can be met with in various parts of Ireland, would also well repay study. In the literature of the 19th and the early 20th centuries can be found travellers' accounts of such houses, although they seldom go into details about the construction. I refer, *e. g.*, to a description of Caesar Otway's from his "Sketches in Erris and Tyrawly", an account of his travels in Northwestern Ireland in 1840:

"The dwellers here were bog troglodytes — the foundations of their dwellings are sunk eight feet or more below the surface of the surrounding black bog, the walls are constructed of wet sods, cut off from the surface of that bog; there is no door or door-case, no chimney; the orifices by which the people enter, and through which the smoke *should* issue, are filled up as suits the wind, with bundles of heath or turf-kreels, filled with potato-stalks; a drain comes out from under the floor of the dwelling, from which the superabundant moisture escapes, or else it would be a common boghole: but, by its means, the water that springs abundantly from the sides and bottom, flows away, and the people sitting or standing within, are free from actual overflow."

Finally, I will draw attention to the stone-built sheepfolds and other shelters and fences for the cattle, the study of which cannot be separated from the study of the primitive houseforms. Of particular interest to the Irish material of that kind is the material published by Daniel Bruun,[19] Mårten Stenberger[20] and other authors. J. Nihlén and G. Boëthius[21] reproduce in connection with this, some stone walls from the Aran Islands. 231 349

A glance at the literary material.

The archaeologists, as has already been mentioned, have studied the stone-built bee-hive houses, but from them we have not many references to houses built of other material, although such houses must naturally have existed. Remarkable is the settlement in Canowheel Mountain, Sligo, consisting of 47 circular walls enclosing spaces of from 20 to 42 feet in diameter. "These were probably protection walls erected to shield from weather huts erected within them and made of flimsier materials."[22] 172 174

In Ireland, there can have existed a millennial tradition of building houses not only with dry stone walls, *fallai fuara,* as in the stone-built *clocháns,* but also with walls of mud or clods, *fallai feidin,* and of *fraigh, i. e.* panel of mud and wattle or lath and plaster construction. The word *fraigh* occurs in some ancient proverbs and phrases signifying the actual wall of the house.[23] In the ancient Irish laws, the word is used for walls of houses. Beyond doubt, *fraigh* means, if Dinneen's interpretation holds, the same wall construction as has been used in Southern Scandinavia and the neighbouring parts of the Continent, from prehistoric times down to the last century.

Although the very comprehensive and learned work of Eugene O'Curry[24] has a number of references to the buildings of the Ancient Irish, it is not easy to gather from them the exact constructional details, nor to decide whether O'Curry has drawn the right conclusions from the terminology in the Laws and the literature. I will not here discuss O'Curry's description, as I am not in a position either to check his conclusions or compare them with the archæological remains or present day habitations regarding the constructional details here in question. I only sum up some remarks from O'Curry that will be useful for further discussion. 174

O'Curry says that ancient habitations were of the simplest character and constructed of wood or, where wood was scarce, of mud. The wooden houses however were made either of wicker-work, or of unhewn, or at best roughly hewn trees, the crevices being filled by mud. (I would suggest that 174 342

174 342 these two wooden wall types can perhaps be compared with such Danish and Scanian walltypes as the "stakavägg" and the "sprötavägg".[25]) The houses were of two forms, 1) long quadrilateral buildings, built of wood or mud and straw like the existing mud cabins, and covered with thatch, and 2) cylindrical houses made of wicker-work and having a cup-shaped or hemispherical roof. The houses built in duns and in stone *caiseals*, and those surrounded by mounds of earth, were probably in all cases round houses. As has already been mentioned, O'Curry is of the opinion that the Gaulish wicker-houses shown on the Column of Antonius correspond accurately to the *tech darach* or oak-house with a *cuach-cleithe* or wicker cup roof described in a tale called the "Intoxication of Ulster".

The round wicker-work house is described by O'Curry as follows: "The round wicker house was built by setting up perpendicularly a number of poles or posts of more or less solidity arranged in a circle of the necessary diameter and at equal distances from each other. The interstices between these poles or posts were then filled up with stout hazel and other rods in the form of wicker or basket work until it reached the required height of the wall. In the meantime there was firmly set up in the centre within a stout post called a *tuireadh* of length commensurate with the required height of the roof; into which were inserted by mortices or otherwise attached a certain number of rafters which descended slantingly all round to the tops of the upright posts of the wall into which they were received by tenon and mortice or otherwise attached. — — —

Across the rafters and ribs thus inserted were then laid bands of laths or narrow slips of wood which were fastened with pegs or with gods, *i. e.* twisted withies forming a regular network from the top of the roof-tree to the walls. On these, again, were laid or fastened, at short distances, what may be called a sheeting of rods and thin branches of trees, stretching from the roof-tree to the wall. And now, the shell of the house being finished, it was thatched with straw, rushes, or sedge and neatly fastened down with scollops. — — — I cannot say how they staunched the walls of the round wicker-house, whether with clay, moss, or skins — — —."

In the Ancient Irish Laws are many references to the wicker-house, *tech fithi.*[26]

The following quotation is a translation of part of a law tract which deals here with the status of an *ócaire*, one of the lesser of the freeholding ranks.[27a]

"The size of his house: it is larger than a house of rentcharge. For the size of the latter is seventeen feet. It is of wickerwork to the lintel. From this to the roof-tree, a *dit* between every two weavings (?). Two doorways

[Text continues top of p. 195 ---- Analyst]

County Galway

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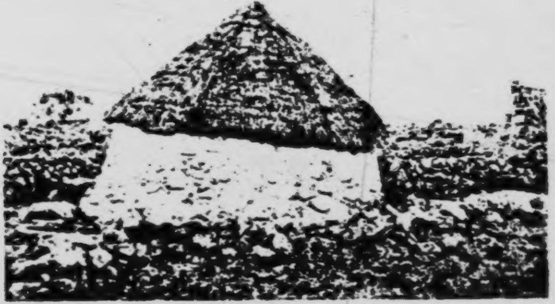
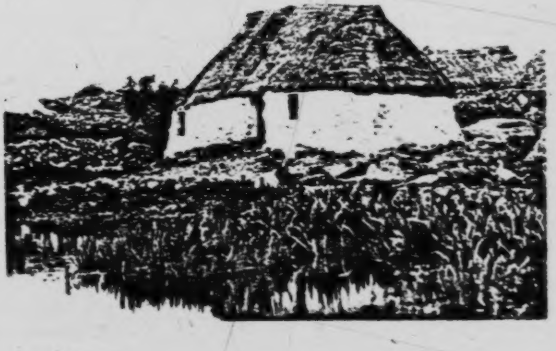
PLATE 35



a. Oval house. Inveran, Co. Galway.



b. Oval house. Inveran, Co. Galway.

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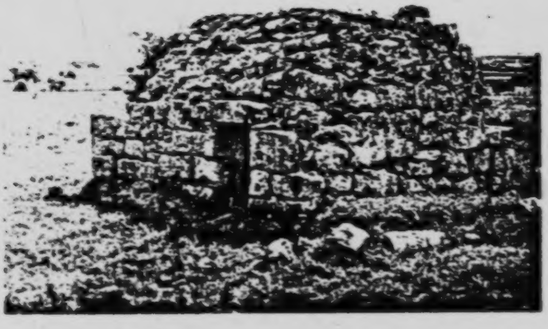

c. Sweating bath. Tuan, Co. Galway.

PLATE 36

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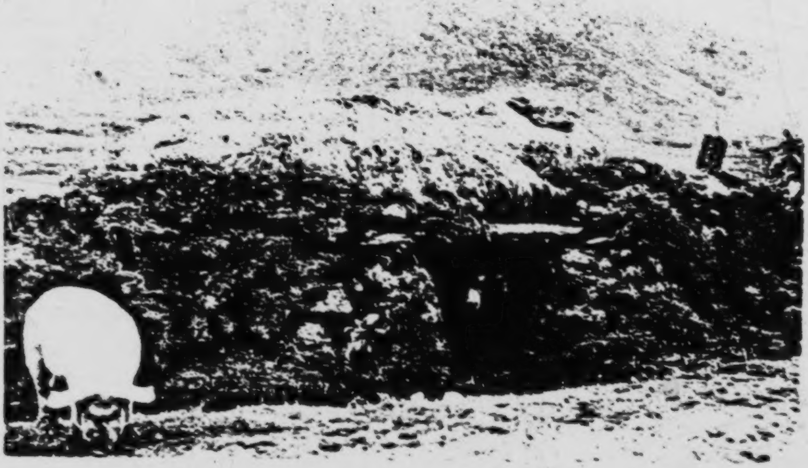

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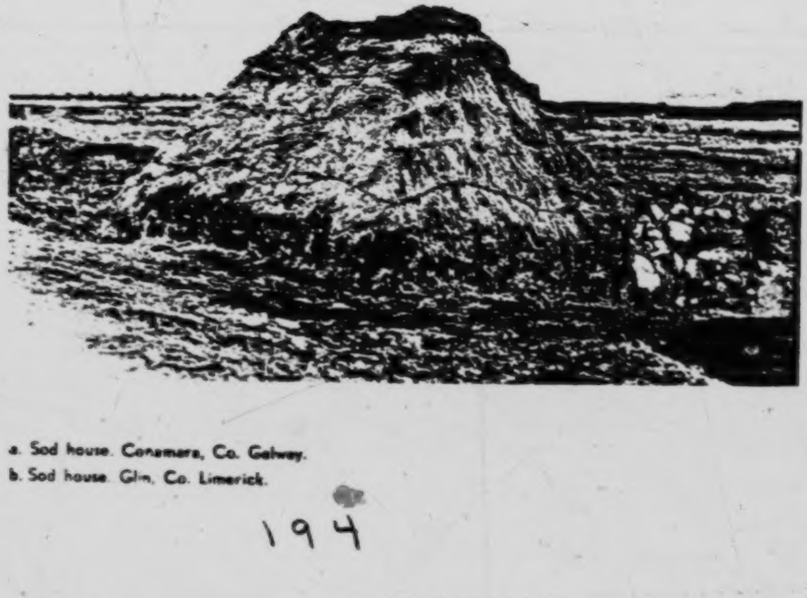

b

a. Sod house. Conamara, Co. Galway.

b. Sod house. Glin, Co. Limerick.

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342
in it. A door for one of them, a hurdle for the other, and this (the hurdle) without (projecting) wattles, without protuberances (?). A bare fence of boards around it. An oaken plank between every two beds."

The designations in the Laws and in early tales as Fled Bricrend, Suidigud Taigi Midehuarta etc., are still difficult to understand, as their vocabulary has not hitherto been elucidated. It will be possible to draw more definite conclusions from them as soon as a joint study by philologists and ethnologists has been carried out. In many parts of Ireland there still survive remains of old building traditions, which in connection with the dialect words, will help to throw light upon the problems of ancient building culture as they are met with in the old Irish literature.

A consideration of the old upper-class house, however, embraces a field outside the scope of this article, involving a discussion of cultural connections over a very wide area.[15]

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[1] Described in Part I of this article, Folkliv 1937, 2/3, p. 207—234. I repete my thanks expressed in my former article to the Irish Folklore Commission and to my Irish friends. I want to add the names of Professor Eóin Mac Néill, Mr. Thomas Mason and Miss Máire Mac Néill, who have kindly given me information and assistance.

[2] Cyril Fox, The Personality of Britain, Cardiff 1933, p. 34 sq.

[3] Wheeler, Prehistoric and Roman Wales, Oxford 1925, p. 260 sq., and Bosch-Gimpera, Etnologia de la Peninsula Ibèrica, Barcelona 1932, p. 490 sq.

[4] The Archæology of Ireland, p. 242.

[5] Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy XXXI, p. 209 sq. Still other references to beehive houses may be found in archæological literature. Oscar Montelius has previously dealt with beehive houses, *e. g.* in Boning, grav och tempel, Antikvarisk tidskrift, vol. 21.

[6] In Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, vol. III, p. 127 sq., and vol. VII, p. 153 sq.

[7] Cf. Analecta Hibernica No. 2, Jan. 1931 p. 53; Arthur Young, A tour in Ireland 1780.

[8] Thomas, op. cit. vol. III, p. 136.

[9] See R. E. M. Wheeler, op. cit. p. 261.

[10] See P. Bosch-Gimpera, op. cit., p. 490 sq.

[11] See *e. g.* S. O. Addy, The Evolution of the English House, London 1933, p. 38 sq.; S. Erixon, Some primitive constructions, Folkliv 1937, 2/3, p. 124 sq.

[12] Norse building customs, in the British Isles, Copenhagen 1934.

[12a] Ireland: its Scenery, Character, etc., Vol. III., London 1843.

[12b] Caesar Otway, A tour in Connaught: comprising sketches of Clonmacnoise, Joyce County, and Achill, Dublin 1839.

[12c] Folkliv 1937, p. 208.

[12d] See Folkliv 1937, p. 217.

[13] Thomas, op. cit., vol. III, p. 130.

[14] The study of the Scottish material shows that the ancient so-called forts or subterranean or semi-subterranean chambers may also be considered. I shall not, however, enter here on a discussion of this complicated matter.

[14b] I am also grateful to Mr. Mason for having supplied all the photographs of Irish clocháns used by me in this article.

[15] On the manners and customs of the ancient Irish, vol. III, p. 33 and elsewhere.

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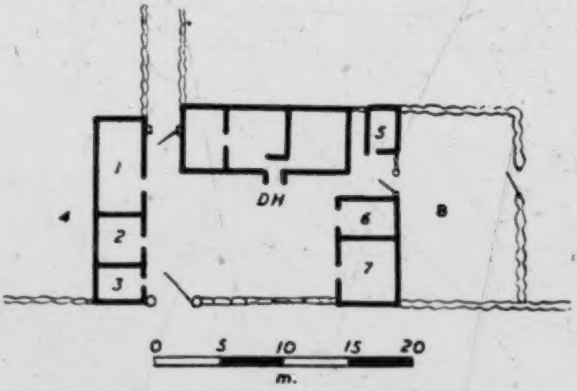
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Fig. 1. Farmyard at Duncormick, Co. Wexford. DH, dwelling house; 1, byre; 2, calf house; 3, store; 4, manure heap; 5, pigsty; 6, cart house; 7, stable; 8, haggard.

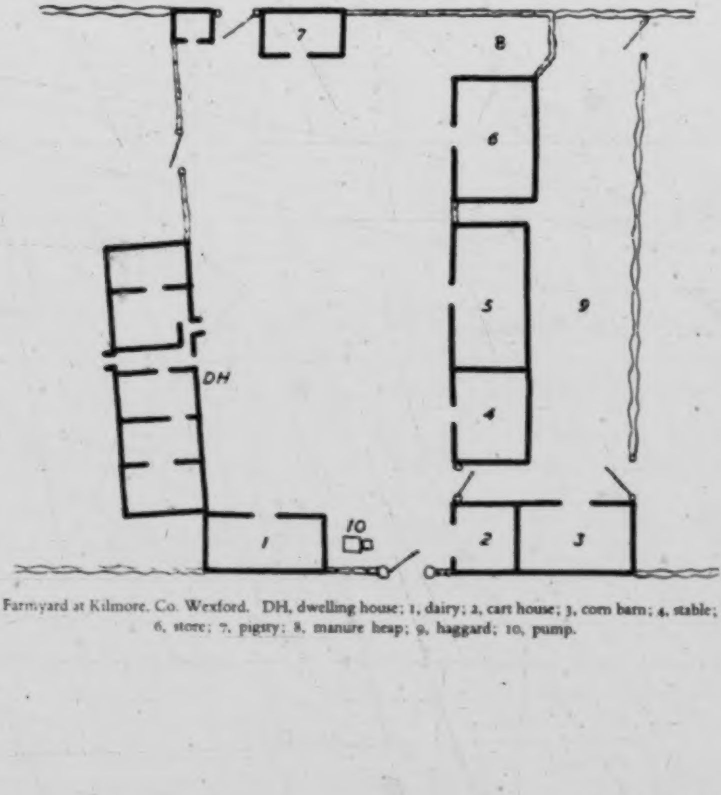
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Fig. 2. Farmyard at Kilmore, Co. Wexford. DH, dwelling house; 1, dairy; 2, cart house; 3, corn barn; 4, stable; 5, byre; 6, store; 7, pigsty; 8, manure heap; 9, haggard; 10, pump.

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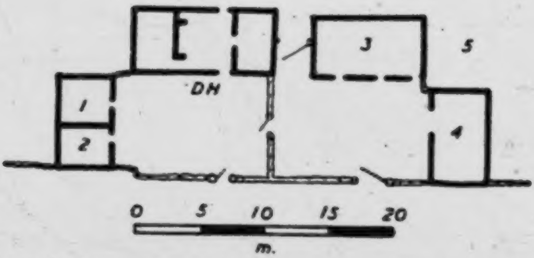

Fig. 3. Farmyard, Killinny, Co. Galway. DH, dwelling house; 1, dairy; 2, store; 3, byre, 4, stable and carts; 5, manure heap.

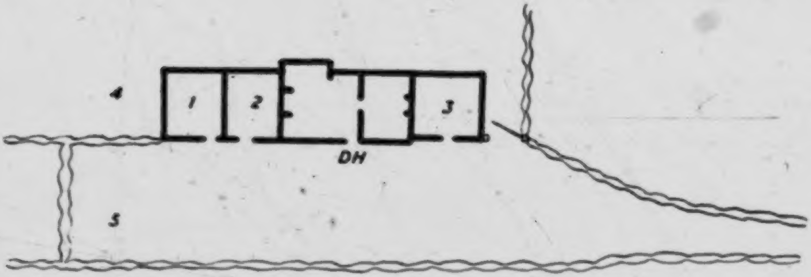

Fig. 4. Farmyard at Glenhull, Co. Tyrone. DH, dwelling house; 1, byre; 2, stable; 3, store; 4, haggard; 5, manure heap.

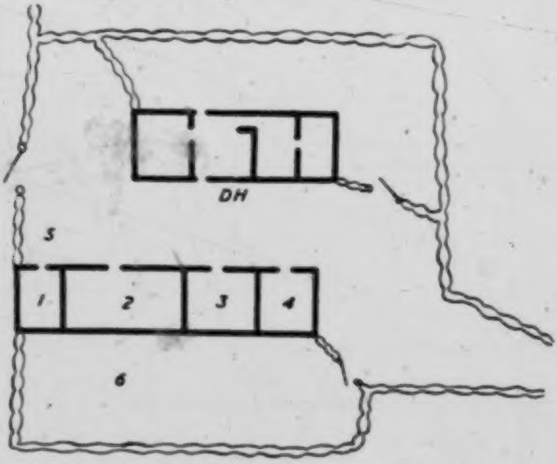

Fig. 5. Farmyard, Athea, Co. Limerick. DH, dwelling house; 1, pigs; 2, byre; 3, stable; 4, store; 5, manure heap; 6, haggard.

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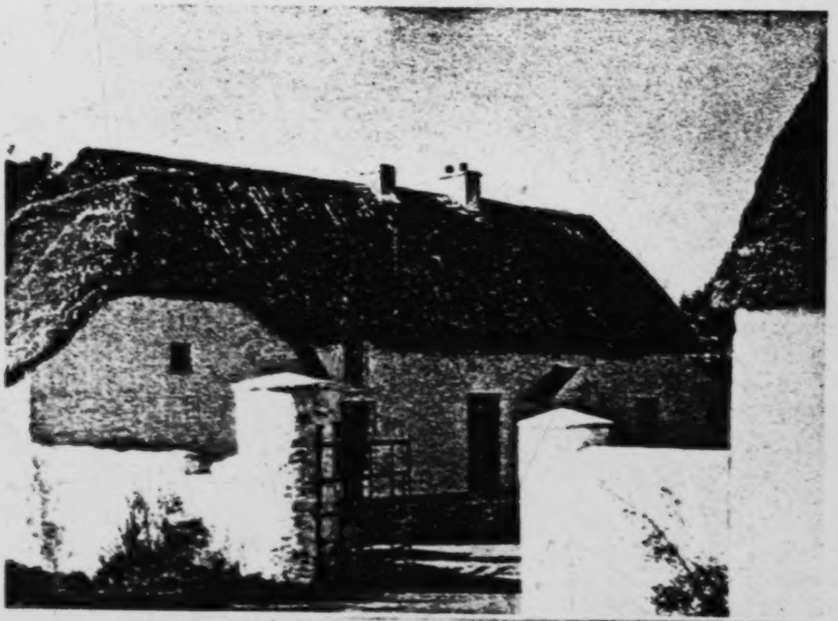

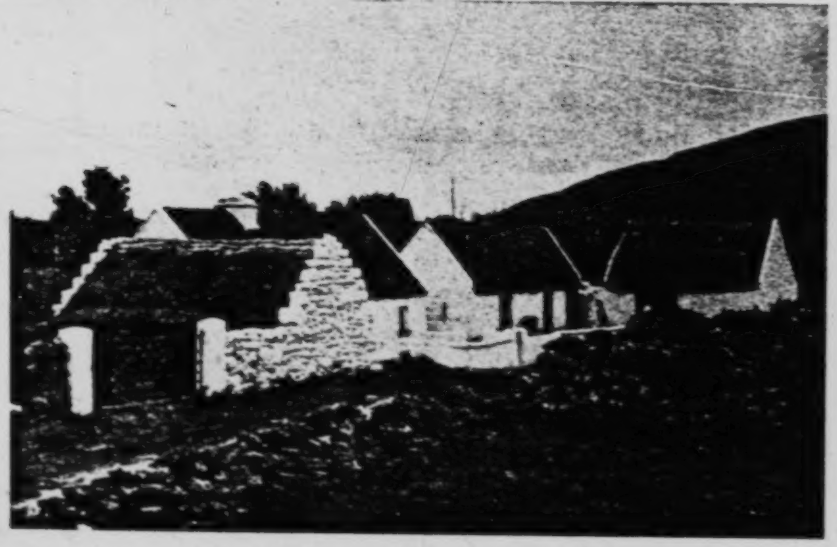

Fig. 6. Farmhouse and yard, Kilmore, Co. Wexford (fig. 2).

Fig. 7. Farmyard, Killimy, Co. Galway (fig. 3).

[p.10]

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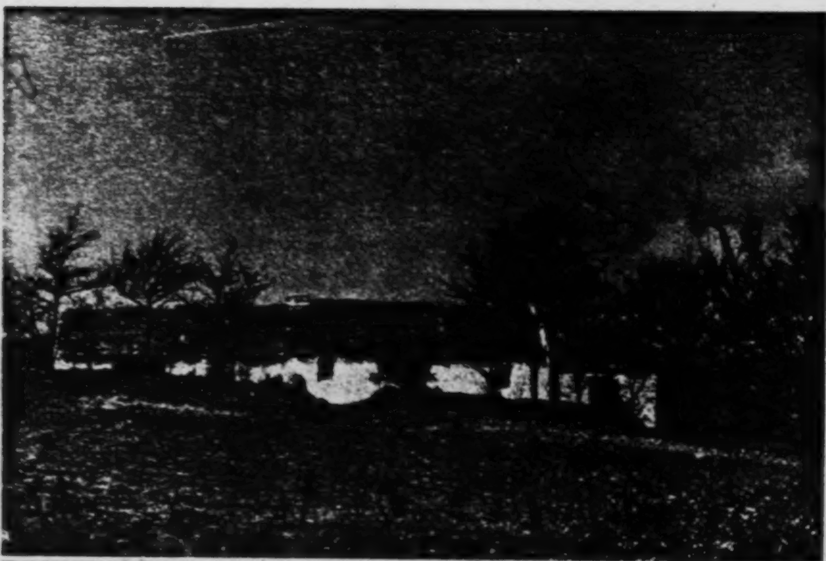

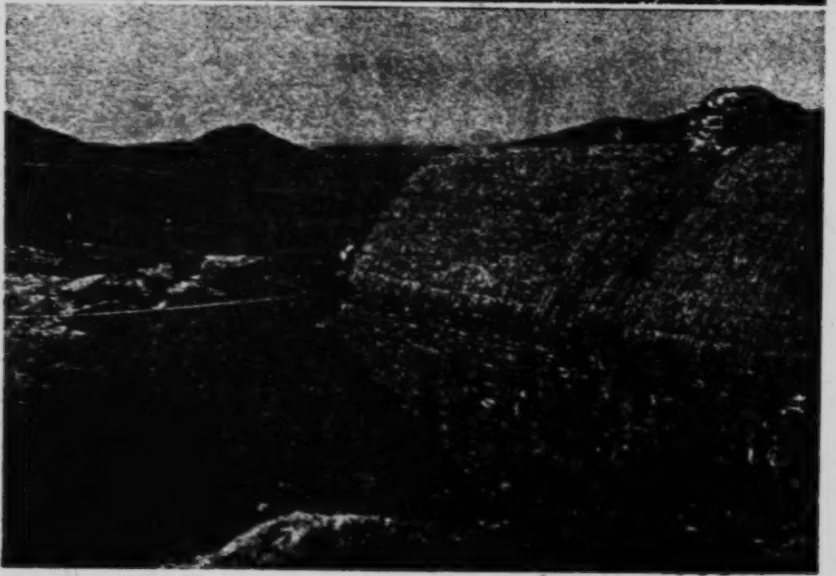

Fig. 8. Farm buildings, Glenhull, Co. Tyrone (fig. 4).

Fig. 9. Farm buildings, parallel lay-out, Lohar, Co. Kerry.

[p. 11]

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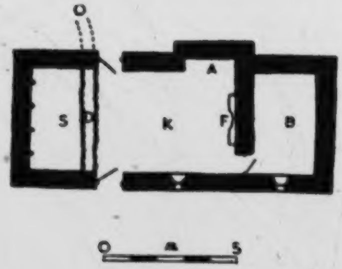
[342]

house, pigsty, calf-pen and sheepfold, and there are several other references in the ancient law tracts to cow-houses and pigstyes.

But, notwithstanding this old and varied farmyard tradition, it is also quite clear that there was, up to the beginning of the present century, a widespread custom of keeping the livestock, or part of it, in the dwelling house. There are very many references to this in descriptions of life and conditions in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Few, however, give any description of the internal arrangement of the houses, or the reason for the custom, and usually the accounts refer to small houses and a few poor animals. Some observers have mentioned the fear of wild beasts or robbers. "They are brought in by night for fear of thieves, the Irish using almost no other kind of theft, or else for fear of wolves."[1] Here the writer refers to the bawns attached to the castles, but of course the same risk existed for the small farmer also. Another traveller writes of a night spent in a house in west Co. Galway: "I had just compos'd myselfe to sleepe when I was strangely surprised to heare the cows and sheep all comeing into my bed chamber. I enquired the meaneing and was told it was to preserve them from the wolfe which everie night was rambling about for prey."[2] Another and much later writer describes a night spent in a small house in the Kerry mountains, near Kenmare: "In the house where I slept—as indeed in every house of the same character in the county—the whole stock of the family, consisting chiefly of cows and sheep, were locked in at night. Such was the extreme poverty of the people that they would not otherwise be safe. ... There was a slight partition between the room where my bed was and the kitchen where there were three cows, a man, his wife and four children."[3] [513]

In many dwelling houses fowl, especially hatching hens, were kept in special coops or boxes, and it was quite usual to have weak or sickly young animals, or calves or lambs which for some reason were separated from their dams, in the kitchen where they had warmth and attention until strong enough to be put with the other animals. In many parts of Ireland the poorest people—



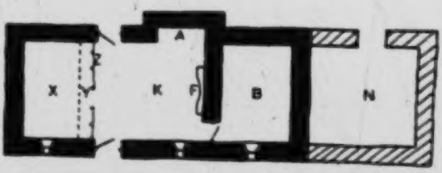


Fig. 10 House at Doolough, Co. Mayo. A, bed alcove; B, bedroom; D, drain; O, drain outlet; K, kitchen; F, fireplace; S, byre.

Fig. 11. House at Srahataggle, Co. Mayo. A, bed alcove; B, bedroom; K, kitchen; F, fireplace; X, former byre; Y, filled-in drain; Z, screen of canvas on wooden frame; N, present byre.

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[1] Fynes Moryson: Itinerary, 1617.

[2] Dunton, John: Letter no. 2 (1699), in MacLysaght, E.: Irish Life in the Seventeenth Century, 1939, 339.

[3] Doheny, M.: The Felon's Track.

[113]

231 351 361 those who had little or no land—commonly kept their animals in the dwelling house (which often had only one room) at night, a cow or two, or perhaps a donkey or pony, a pig or a goat and a few hens, the larger animals tied to pegs or rings set in the walls, the smaller in coops or boxes. In many houses, even large farmhouses, a special coop or perch was provided for the cock, whose crowing served to call the people of the house in the morning. A vivid description of the housing conditions of a remote and isolated community in the second half of the nineteenth century is given by Tomás Ó Crohan, writing about the Blasket Islands off the coast of Co. Kerry in the extreme south west: "There was a coop beside the partition with hens in it, and a hatching hen in an old pot nearby. At night a cow or two, a calf or two, an ass, two dogs tied to the wall or loose about the house. ... the two or three dogs would lie at the foot of the bed, the cow or two cows below them, tethered to the wall, the calf or two with the run of the kitchen and their muzzles in the fire. The ass was tied on the side of the house opposite the cows, and a cat with a couple of kittens in the fireplace niche ... And as well as all the other animals you might find a pet lamb or two about the house."[1] The custom of bringing the cattle into the dwelling house for milking during the period of the year when they are kept outdoors, as well as keeping them in the dwelling house during the winter period is recorded from Co. Kerry.[2] Indeed it is quite clear that, throughout the west and north of Ireland, the keeping of livestock in their small dwelling houses by the poorer people was quite a common practice up to the last years of the nineteenth century, and in houses from which the animals have long been ejected we may still see the rings or pegs to which they used to be tied.

● 342 351 361 231 There was, however, one type of house which was built and arranged as a dwelling for both people and animals, and which was still in use in the early years of the present century in parts of Connaught and Ulster, that is, in west Co. Galway, Co. Mayo, west Co. Sligo and west and north Co. Donegal. Figure 10 shows the plan of a typical specimen, at Doolough, Co. Mayo. This house is 12 m long and 5.5 m wide, built of stone and mortar and roofed with straw or grass thatch. It consists of two apartments, the smaller being a bedroom and the larger a kitchen-livingroom-cattle byre; the two apartments separated by the wall of the hearth. On one side of the hearth is a bed alcove. Two windows, one in each room and both on one side—the front—of the house, give light, and there are two doors, one in the front of the house and one in the back, placed directly opposite each other. On the farther side of these doors from the fire an open drain extends from side to side of the house; this drain is about 50 cm wide and 25 cm deep and is lined with flat stones. The space between this drain and the end wall of the house is the byre, and here, during the winter, three or four cows were kept tethered to the wall. The drain passed under the wall and led to the manure heap outside.

Figure 11 shows the manner in which many of these houses were changed during the last fifty years or so. A byre was built, attached to the house, as here, or quite apart from it. The drain was filled in, and a partition of wood, or, as here of canvas stretched on a wooden frame, erected to enclose the former byre which now became a bedroom. In many houses the partition was formed

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[1] Ó Crohan, Tomás: An tOileánach, chapter III.

[2] Campbell, Åke: "Irish Fields and Houses", Béaloideas, v, 68–70.

or partly formed by one or more large pieces of furniture, such as a dresser and a cupboard or 231
press. 342

While recorded instances of this type are, as we have seen, confined to comparatively small 361
areas of the west and north west, there is little doubt that identical or similar forms were once 351
more widespread in Ulster, Connaught and parts of west Munster, where a strong folk-memory of the regular stalling of cattle in the lower end (the end farthest from the fire) of the kitchen still exists, and where one common house type has the two opposite doors and the lower end cut off [173] by a partition of light material, as in the reconstructed house shown in figure 11. In Leinster and east Munster, in contrast to this, there is little or no tradition of cattle in the dwelling houses, and [184] there is here a form of house in which the relative positions of the entrance door, hearth and hearth wall[1] would make the bringing of a large animal, such as a cow, into the house very difficult and in many cases quite impossible.

A recent article has shown that while the dispersed settlement pattern now dominates almost 361
the whole of Ireland, there were formerly, and to a little extent still are, certain definite areas of
village or group settlement type.[2] This, however, does not mean that a distinctive type of farm- 351
yard pattern is to be found in such groups or villages; on the contrary, the farmyard type in them is the same as that in the adjoining areas of dispersed settlement. Thus, the groups or villages of east Co. Galway and south Co. Kilkenny are formed of farmyards of the courtyard type, those of west Co. Kerry of the parallel type and those of west Co. Mayo and north and west Co. Donegal of the dwelling house-cum-byre type.

The middle of the twentieth century sees the Irish farmyard, in common with many other elements of rural life, in a stage of transition. On many farms new outhouses, especially new cattle-byres, are being built; in others new dwelling houses have been built, and the old dwelling houses refitted as byres, stores or stables, thus quite changing the aspect of the farmyard. The dwelling-cum-byre type of the north west has virtually disappeared, and in a few years will be no more than a memory; the extended type, in which dwelling house and outhouses form a long block of buildings is also disappearing.

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[1] Ó DANACHAIR, CAOIMHÍN: "Hearth and Chimney in the Irish House", Béaloideas, xvi, 102, 104.

[2] FLATRÈS, P.: "L'Habitat Agricole Aggloméré en Irlande", Chronique Géographique des Pays Celtes, 1954, 112–24. [113]

people describe it. Much of it was rough, wet 592
mountain land, but the phrase implies that it was 361
good enough at least to provide grass for animals. All farms are described in this way, for by the cows and the small 'gardens' of potatoes, cabbage, oats and turnips, the small farmers live. We shall have more to say of agriculture in another context; I think the explanation is sufficient here.

My host's house in Luogh, as I have said, was 342 ●
like the others. It was a bit 'stronger', that is, neater, better built and kept, than many of the others, but it was like the others in all essentials. It was a whitewashed stone cottage, rectangular, roofed with slate (though it was only a few years ago that they gave up thatch). Its long sides faced roughly north and south, each with a door opening directly out into the yards. In the gable of the roof was a loft for sleeping; otherwise it was confined to a single story. The central room, the largest by far, was the kitchen. There the family passed their lives and prepared and ate the food cooked on the hearth. The hearth was an open turf fire, built in a chimney large enough to have two hobs or seats deep within on either side. It had, too, an iron hook which swung the cooking-pots out into the room from off the fire.

Behind this hearth was another room. It was 342
called, for its position in the house, the 'west room'. 353
This is the 'west room' which is to provide my first example.

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353 In most countrymen's houses, especially in poorer regions, the 'west room', that behind the hearth, is the only room except for the kitchen and the loft. In some houses, however, there is another room too. This is usually a bedroom, at the opposite end of the kitchen. This was the case at my host's.

353 But in either case it soon becomes apparent that there is something special about the west room. At Luogh this struck one's eye immediately. At my host's the room was a sort of parlour into which none but distinguished guests were admitted. In it were kept pictures of the dead and emigrated members of the family, all 'fine' pieces of furniture, symbolic brass objects brought in by the bride at marriage; the rubrics used when mass was celebrated in the house, in fact all religious objects, crucifixes, and so forth, except the 'blessed lamp' and a 'holy picture' in the kitchen. Nor were my hosts alone in keeping objects of sentimental and religious value in this special room. Other houses did likewise. The general feeling was that such objects 'belonged' there.

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776 But these facts had little significance until others began to appear. Here we enter the realm which we ordinarily call 'old custom'. The 'west room' had still another association, of a supernatural cast. This appeared only gradually. The 'west room' was of central importance in fairy lore.

In this all Luogh concurred, though few could

be found to give it expression. The cult of the 353
fairies, these days, is branded as 'superstition'. It 776
is under fire from townsman, school-teacher, and priest. But even those who could express no views could be seen to act as if they too were believers.

Where fairy paths were remembered to pass the house, they went by the west room. Where food and water was left out at night, it was left there. No outhouse, shed, or other building could be built
on this side of the house. That would bring bad [777]
luck. Very few could or would tell why; they left it to a common inference. The building would be 'in the way'. Nevertheless, reluctant as they might be to express belief, my hosts none the less practised
it. No house of Luogh's twenty-six had any shed or [342]
outhouse at its western end.

Here were two very definite associations with the west room. What did they mean? The attitudes they represented were respect, and perhaps a little fear; but it was respect that was dominant. What was this respect and why should it show itself in fairy-lore and in household furnishing?

Faced with such a problem the anthropologist's 353
usual recourse is to history. Traditionally the west 773
is the land of the dead. In the ancient sun-cult, in 776
which early man has likened his own progress to that of the sun's daily and yearly course, the west is the sacred abode of the dead. Even today, we speak of dying, half jocularly, as 'going west'. In ancient Celtic mythology, the heaven at life's end,

369 of the Free State, at least, the landlord is gone and the true big farmer is rare. The town's hinterland is the world of the small farmers. And the town lives by its connection with the social order to which the countryman is attached. One need probe only a little way beneath the surface of conventionalities to learn that the connection is much more than the economics of distribution and exchange.

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● 342

In the first place, the shop is also the seat of a familistic identification, very like that of land and farm. Ireland is better supplied with shops, at least in number, than any comparable European nation. A very large proportion of her population lives by retail trade. But one must not think of these shops, so numerous in every Irish town, as great department stores, or as units in a country-wide chain. The former, of course, do exist in cities, and the latter, called multiple-shops, are a new invasion. They have little place as yet in the smaller towns. The typical shop is a less imposing affair. It supports, normally, only the family which works it.

Such a shop is most often a small two-story building. The ground floor is evenly divided between the business premises and the household kitchen. In front, a single step in from the street, a single deep room, whose width is that of the building's front, houses counter, shelves, shopstock and money-till. The business of a lifetime goes forward in this room. In back, a flagstone-floored kitchen with an open hearth duplicates, on

a more elaborate scale perhaps, the country farm 366
house kitchen. Like its country counterpart it is the 347
seat of family life. 369
342

Upstairs, a front room facing the street is transformed, by family portraits, an ornamental mantle and a piece or two of good mahogany, into a ceremonial parlour. Behind this, range the bedrooms of the family. Perhaps, in affluence and refinement there is an upstairs sitting-room as well. For the shop is no mere place of business. It is first of all a household, of which one section and one only is devoted to the world of affairs.

The family which this household houses and 443
supports, in the majority of cases, works the shop 369
in much the same way that the family of the farmer 593
works the land. It conducts its business as a united corporation in which all members may take a hand and each have his place. Husband and wife tend the counter together and between them shopkeeping is divided; sons and daughters work as shop-assistants, as long as they remain at home. Only when affluence lifts the shop to importance and dignifies the shopkeeper with the title and station of merchant, expanding his business to wholesaling, is this arrangement greatly modified.

Yet, self-sufficient as this familistic shop-world 369
is, the countryman has many a connection with it. 443
It lives its own quiet life and plies its own trade so different from the farmer's work upon the farm. Town life breeds its own sentiment and weaves its

among the hill pastures. In spring, after a long winter, the 174
cows were often so weak that they had to be carried out of 621
the byre. When sufficiently restored they were driven, 221
together with the sheep and in some cases the poultry, to the 231
hills. In Donegal, according to an account written a century
ago, " the migration usually took place upon a fixed day,
the junior members of the family generally perform the
journey on the top of the household goods, and thus the chair
or two, the creels, and the iron pot, the piggin, and the various
selected *et cetera*—as if invested with a sort of dull locomotive
power—creep along the roads. The little churn is slung on one
side of the animal, into which the youngest child is often
thrust, its head being the only part visible."

Many townland names ending in " booley " or " boley " 221
assist us in our search for evidence, while in many places the 342 ●
actual remains of the booleys can still be seen. They were 343
generally built of sods or turf, or of wicker-work faced with
sods, and roofed with branches and heather. Some were
circular and others square or rectangular, and the latter had 221
two opposite doors through which, it seems, the cows passed 234
in turn as they were milked inside, a tradition which is still
kept up in the two-doored cabins of Co. Kerry, where Dr.
Campbell has described how, in summer, the cows are milked
in the kitchen, entering at the front door and being driven
out by the back. The booleys were built in clusters, the
inhabitants of a particular " town" presumably living together.
Butter-making was the chief occupation, and the food of the
herders consisted largely of " whitemeats " that is milk
products such as curds and whey. Cheese seems to have been
of minor importance, though sheep were milked and it is
probable that, as is customary among the transhumants of
southern Europe, the milk was made into cheese. The butter [251]
appears to have been preserved—it was un-salted—by burying
it in wooden, skin, bark or cloth containers in the bog. This
" bog-butter " frequently turns up in turf-cutting operations :
it is white or yellowish in colour and smells like ripe old cheese.
A keg dug up in Co. Meath was found to contain over seven
stones of butter.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942

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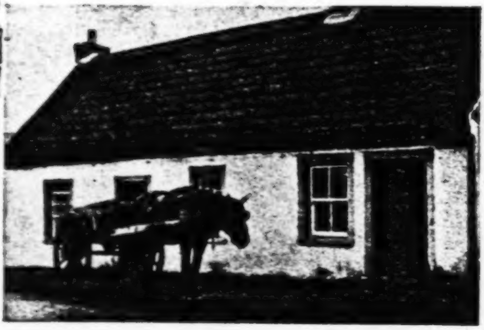
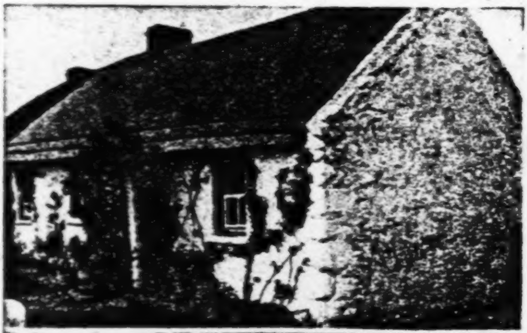
Plate III

342
[492]
[493]



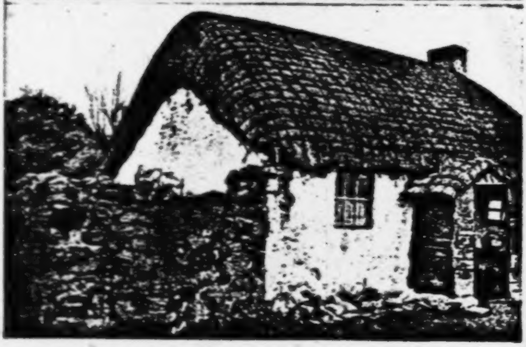
THATCHED
ROOF
SECURED WITH
PEGGED
FIR-ROPES

N. ANTRIM



SCOLLOP
THATCH
OF MARROM
GRASS

MAGILLIGAN
CO. DERRY



ROPED
THATCH
OF
RYE STRAW

ARTICLAVE,
CO. DERRY

[facing p. 57]

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CHAPTER VII.

THE IRISH PEASANT HOUSE.

342 The Irish peasant house consists of a low single-storied rectangle, some 12 to 15 feet wide internally but of varying length, customarily thatched and whitewashed; but this generalised description embraces a surprising range of styles. So much abuse has been levelled at the Irish cabin that it is well to recall the opinion of a Swedish scientist who writes as follows :—" Lacking nearly every architectural consciousness and at the same time every kind of imported building material, the Irish peasant house never stands out in bold relief against its background but melts into it even as a tree or rock. Whenever the old building traditions are faithfully maintained its features are of a fine simplicity. The best Irish thatching gives the finest peasant roof in Europe."

342
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571 The other side of the picture is the dirt and smells inseparable from the long habits of close association with livestock, so that within living memory, " cows and calves, men, women and children, horse and poultry were herded together in one apartment." Poverty and the rack-rent system have been blamed for this, but behind it lie facts of ethnology which are rooted in the remote past. Local authorities are striving to wipe away the stigma of the old order, and are spreading a " rash " of red-roofed cottages over the fair face of the country, but there is still a great mass of material for study.

[p. 57]

342 It has often been asserted that the Irish lived, until a few centuries ago, in wattled circular huts. Archæology tells us, however, that well-built stone structures were used from the very dawn of civilisation: the dry walling of the megalith builders is of superb construction and the stone foundations of houses of the period, both round and rectangular in plan, have been unearthed. It seems probable that stone, timber, wattle, clay and sods were all employed from very early times and that Ireland shared the traditions of the "timber province" of northern Europe and the "stone province" of the Mediterranean. Although it is well-nigh impossible to discuss present house forms without reference to the past we shall confine ourselves to the last half-century in this necessarily brief review. But reference must be made to the lay-out of some old cabins which have been described, for it throws light on surviving customs and nomenclature. These were built on a slope at right-angles to the contours—more recent houses are placed along the slope—so that the top end was excavated into the hill-side and profited from the semi-subterranean warmth, while the lower end housed the animals, the slope allowing the refuse to drain away. The terms "top" and "bottom" gable are still applied to houses of the gable-chimney type.

This brings us to the fundamental division of present-day Irish cabins into gable-hearth and central-hearth types. Owing to the practice of extending gabled houses behind the chimney it is not always possible to say at a glance whether the presence of a chimney near the centre of the roof denotes a central-hearth house. And even when the hearth is situated against the gable it can sometimes be shown that it has been moved to that position within the last century or so. For our present purpose it is simpler to classify the cabins into gabled and hip-roofed types (Fig. 19). The former is universal in the north, but as one travels south one sees the tops of the gables rounding into a half-hip until, at the Boyne, the hipped style is established, though the gabled form is found side by side with it throughout the south. Some examples in the west have rounded corners, making them an elongated

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[p.59]

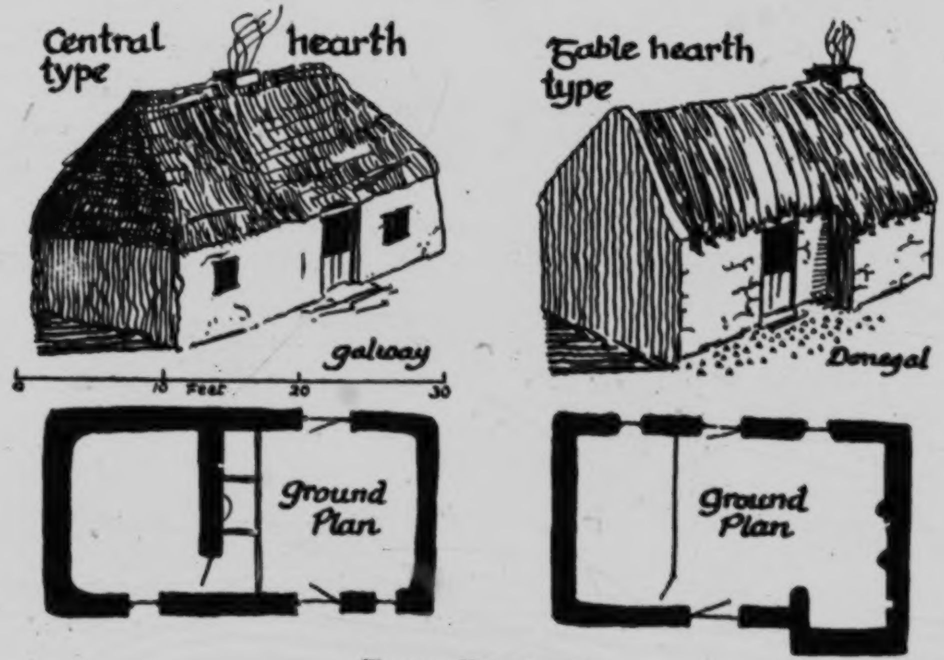
Central hearth type
Galway
0
10 Feet
20
30
Ground Plan
Gable hearth type
Donegal
Ground Plan

Fig. 19. House types.

342

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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342 oval in plan: the problem of the origin of the hipped roof is discussed in Chapter 9. It should be realized that there are many transition types, and of course slated houses are rapidly replacing the old styles, but the division into upright gables and hipped roofs is fundamental. Dr. Campbell's pioneer work in this field has met with a hostile reception in some quarters: [113] see for example Mr. Colm Ó Lochlainn's review in *The Irish Book Lover*, January, 1940.

Within these broad divisions there is endless variety of construction, internal lay-out and roofing technique. Of special interest is the projecting bed-wing, the "outshot" or "cailleach" (Fig. 19), which is attached to gabled houses throughout the north-west from Co. Derry to Co. Galway. It may be compared with the "half-neuk" beds of the Orkneys and Faroes, and has its parallels too in the wall-beds of the Hebridean black-houses. The device allows the large bed (6 ft. by 4) to take its traditional place at the fire-end of the house without unduly narrowing the all-important space around the hearth. The bed recess is cut off from the room by curtains or, formerly, by hanging straw mats.

342
231 Single-roomed kitchen byres, where the family occupies the top or hearth-end and cattle the other, are now a thing of the past, but a few examples have survived in their original state, with an open drain crossing the floor and emptying at the side of the door. The custom of taking the animals under the family roof was once prevalent over north-western Europe in regions of difficulty where access to the cattle in all weathers was a determining factor. Tenacious usage rather than poverty ensured its survival into recent times, where the mutual advantage of the custom is summed up in the phrases, "the cow keeps the house warm," and "warmth increases the yield of milk." Two other points should be borne in mind, its relation to the system of booleying described in Chapter 5, and the necessity in former times of protecting the precious animals from wild beasts.

342 As a rule the bottom or byre-end was later converted into a dairy, store or spare bedroom, but the principal bedroom,

called simply " the room " or—in the Gaeltacht—the " west room," though not always at the west end, extends behind the chimney which helps to warm it. A wealth of customs and superstitions centres in the West Room; they have been described by Dr. Arensberg in his book, " The Irish Countryman." It is considered unlucky to build on to the other end of the house, that is the bottom gable. Similarly it is unlucky to widen a house. The " developed " Irish house thus consists of three compartments and is never more than a single room in width. The older houses are for the most part of stone, either dry-built or with mud laid as mortar. But mud-walled structures are common in areas where stone is not convenient: they by no means denote extreme poverty because from the absence of stones they are often situated in the richest alluvial valleys. A Dublin daily paper recently asked its readers, in a column headed " Believe it or not," to marvel at the fact that certain African tribes actually lived in houses built of mud! Here and there a few sod houses survive, and there is still standing in Co. Antrim a roomy dwelling occupied by a healthy and intelligent family, cut out of solid turf to the height of the eaves, the surrounding peat-bottom, now the farmland, having had several feet of turf removed from it. The stone and mud houses are almost invariably whitewashed both inside and out. Walls vary greatly in thickness but average from 20 to 30 inches. 342 [777]

A feature of many of these older houses is the two opposite doors at back and front, the latter always supplemented by a half-door which keeps animals and children in or out, forms an arm-rest for conversational interludes, and helps to regulate the fire draught. Back or front door could be used according to the wind, and this is the reason commonly advanced to explain the opposite doors. We have seen in the previous chapter, however, its relation to the pastoral tradition, and it should be added that parallels can be adduced from a wide province extending from southern Europe to Scandinavia. We may mention the feeding walk found in the old Welsh " long houses." As with many other parts of the house, superstition attaches to the use of the back door, for

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342 instance the stranger must not be allowed to leave the house that way lest he take the luck of the house with him. In the Aran Islands it was the custom to carry out the corpse through the back door. [764]

The deal door has not long since replaced, in remote spots, the wickerwork frame, lined with straw, or the hanging straw mat, and I have been told of houses where a creel offered the only protection. There may be only one small window, towards the hearth-end, for the open door provides light.
[281] A dried sheepskin was a substitute for glass, and I have come across windows where a sheet of glass was sealed with clay without any frame. Where the hole was open, a handful of hay or a wicker shutter closed it at nights. These conditions help us to understand why the window or windows, even now, tend to be restricted to the side sheltered from the prevailing winds.

a Coupled Roof: Donegal

Fig. 20.

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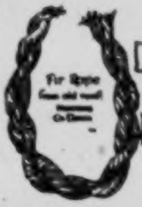
We now come to the roof with its timber framework and thatch. It generally consists of couples resting on the side-walls and joined together by tie-beams at the top; and houses are referred to not as measuring so many feet but as being two- three- or four-coupled. The rib-lengths, between the couples, are a kind of architectural unit.[1] In most old cottages the frame of the roof is of bog-fir, but its use has been superseded by imported "fir." There are many different methods of joining the couples, for example in Donegal they do not actually meet but have a short tie at the top which rounds the roof against the wind (Fig. 20). If the walls are of clay, sod or turf, the couples may be supported on internal beams placed upright against the side-walls, but the purlin method is generally adopted to avoid the thrust of the couple ends. Long beams run from gable to gable, and may be seen projecting outside to allow for the possible movement of the end-walls. This method of roofing allows of greater width than the coupled roof and is preserved, for example, in the old weavers' houses around Lough Neagh, where space was needed for the large looms. (Figs. 22c, 27 & 28.)

On the framework of couples or purlins lighter timber was placed at intervals and on these were laid at right angles rows of branches or laths, often made out of split bog timber. Where teasels were cultivated for the home woollen industry their dried stalks were employed for this purpose. Then came a layer of "scraws," peeled from a carefully selected spot where the grass is tough with a spade or flachter (Chapter 15) and placed on the roof in long overlapping strips with the matted roots inwards. The scraws were of standard sizes, for instance 12 ft. long by 2 ft. by 1½ inches thick. but they were shorter than this in the south, where the flachter was not known. The scraws were generally sewn to the roof timbers with loops of sugán or fir-rope (Fig. 21). The sod layer, while universal in old houses throughout the north, is not always found in the south. Professor O'Riordain has described old houses in Co. Limerick, for example, where the thatch is sown directly on to the battens.



[283]

[184]

Fig. 21.

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[1] *cf.* the fork-intervals or "bays" of the old English house.

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342

Then comes the thatch itself, which, while customarily of straw—rye is considered the best—may consist of tough mountain grass, rushes, marram grass, flax, reeds, and not long ago, heather or even potato haulms. Old houses in the north-east sometimes have a thick layer of flax waste or "shows" under the thatch. With the many ways of shaping and securing the thatch it is not possible to deal at length. One of the oldest devices is the sugán or rope method (Fig. 22), common in the west and in coastal or exposed situations elsewhere. A network of ropes is secured to stone pegs at the eaves or weighted down with stones that may either hang loose or rest on the roof above the eaves. Where the gable end rises above the thatch the ropes run over the roof-ridge and are supplemented only by a single eave-rope or lath, but in Mayo the gable is stepped so that horizontal ropes may be carried through the angles and secured in the gable ends. Another coastal method, found for example in north Antrim and in Connemara, consists of horizontal bands or ropes of bog-fir, sally or heather, pegged into the thatch at intervals (Fig. 22). A common way of securing the thatch is to plaster the ridge and, in mud-walled houses, the strips above the gable-tops, with mud, or latterly with cement. In the latter case the thatch protects the mud walls by projecting over the ends (Fig. 22). Dwellings roofed in this way are known in Inishturk, off the Mayo coast, as "shaken houses," in contrast to the "stitched houses" of tied ropes. Finally there is the scollop or scobe thatch, secured by bent rods which are hidden (Fig. 23) except at the ridge and along the eaves, where they may be worked into lozenge patterns. The tools of a scollop thatcher are illustrated in Fig. 24. This method, it has been claimed, is due to English influence, but it would be instructive to compare its distribution with known culture borrowals. It occurs as far west as Kerry and even Connemara and is the usual method on the steep-roofed houses of Galway city. (*cf.* Pl. III.)

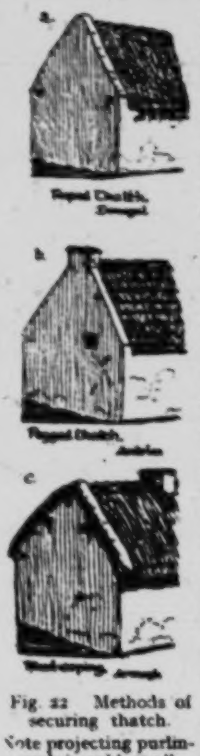
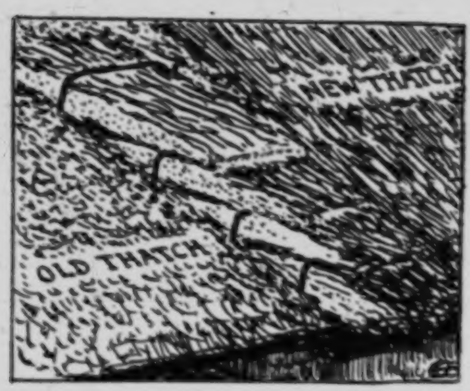


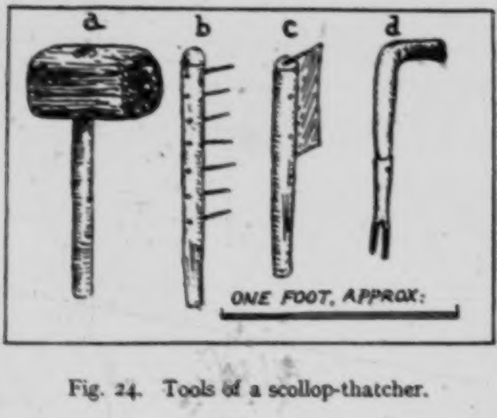
Fig. 22 Methods of securing thatch. Note projecting purlin-ends in gable "c"

Two protruding elements of the house remain to be mentioned—the porch and the chimney. Neither was common a century ago, and where they are present on an old house they


NEW THATCH
OLD THATCH

342

Fig. 23. Scollop thatch


a
b
c
d
ONE FOOT, APPROX:

[413]

Fig. 24. Tools of a scollop-thatcher.

[p. 65]

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342 can be shown or assumed to be additions. A wicker windbreak
of birch or hazel (called the wassock or corrag in Co. Antrim),
was occasionally erected at one side of the door. Here, too,
there was often a stone bench or "stile." The chimney
generally betrays its modernity by being built of brick, but
wooden or wattled chimneys, neatly thatched and bound with
sugán, are not uncommon, and there are a few chimneyless
dwellings still inhabited in the west. Old houses frequently
have no more than a few inches of chimney projecting, and it
is recorded that when efficient chimneys were built by improving
landlords they were promptly covered with a sod, " because
the smoke keeps them warm." It remains to be said that in
former days house-building, like so many tasks demanding
much labour, was a communal affair. " The custom on such
occasions "—the scene is Donegal a century ago—" is for the
person who has the work to be done to hire a fiddler, upon
[476] which all the neighbours joyously assemble and carry, in an
incredibly short time, the stones and timber upon their backs
[482] to the site, men, women and children alternately dancing
[535] and working while daylight lasts, when they adjourn to some
dwelling where they finish the night, often prolonging the
dance to dawn of day."

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CHAPTER VIII.

THE INTERIOR OF THE HOUSE: FIRESIDE AND FOOD.

As we step inside an old Irish cottage, over a threshold of 352
stone slabs or a pattern of small cobble-stones, we tread on a 342 ●
hard mud floor in which we may see, towards the hearth, the "pot hole" where the large iron pot rests when it is lifted off the fire. I have noticed similar holes in the mud floor, with the remains of the round-bottomed pottery vessel inside, near the excavated hearths of Irish houses nearly 40 centuries old. In paved kitchens a block of wood set flush with the flags [354]
answers the same purpose or there may be an iron pot rest (Fig. 25). The area surrounding the hearth is always paved, and the fire itself, in the old style, is at floor level. We shall be invited to take a seat at the fire, for this is the place of honour given to strangers: the fireside is both the focus of 352
family life and the symbol of hospitality. The seat may be a [574]
stone slab built into the fireplace, so that the social tradition is incorporated in the architecture of the hearth, or it may be a roughly made but sturdy chair, bench or "creepie" (Fig. 26). The low stool not only brings one near fire-level, but keeps one's head out of the peat smoke hanging in the open rafters, while its three legs find firm footing on the uneven floor. Other low stools are made of solid turf or wood—a section of a tree-trunk—or again of coiled straw-rope, while chairs are often made with seats of sugán or of rush. Comfortable high-backed chairs fashioned out of straw in the manner of a

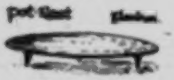

Fig. 25.

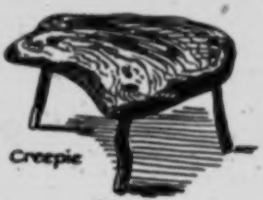

Fig. 26.

[p. 67]

352 bee-hive were common in some districts, but in parts of Mayo one rarely sees chairs of any kind. Step or ladder backed chairs with rush or straw seats are widespread: in the north-east chairs with wooden seats and upright-barred backs are [372] perhaps more usual. The turf fire is never allowed to go out: the glowing turves are heaped with ash at night and can be readily blown into a flame in the morning.

● 342 If the house has kept its brace and wattled chimney we shall be sitting under a canopy which tapers upwards to the smoke hole. The brace is a great beam extending from wall to wall, or resting at one end on a post some 5 feet out from the end-wall: between post and wall there may be a side partition or curtain-wall (Fig. 27) known in the Armagh-Meath area as the jamb-wall or the "hollan."[1] In some districts the front door is placed opposite this wall, but not, I fancy, in really old houses. In that case there may be a small window—the "spy-hole" "entry," or "jamb-window"—in the partition, allowing the sitter at the fireside to keep an eye on the open door. I have seen several houses in Co. Armagh where one has to stoop under the projecting brace to enter the house (Fig. 27). A further development is to hang a door on the brace-post, thus making a kind of internal porch or small hall. The jamb-wall is found from Co. Down to Co. Limerick but I have not seen it in the north-western province of the outshot.

342
352 The canopy is constructed of wattles or of sugán, plastered with mud and cow-dung and white-washed outside. Canvas or boards are recent substitutes. At the sides of the chimney, above the ends of the brace, are small lofts or storeplaces, and there may be a larger "half-loft" over the other end of the kitchen—a relic of the time when corn and hay were kept here for feeding the animals below. A usual feature, under the stone seat to one side of the fire, is the ash or rubbish pit, another survival from far prehistory; and balancing it on the other side of the fire there may be a warm stone recess for the [231] sitting hen. At the back of the fire is a thick flag—the backstone—or a mass of clay forming the hob, but this is carefully built up of stones or bricks in eastern and southern

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[1] This word is also used in N. England and Scotland for the curtain-wall. In Lancashire it is termed the "speer."

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Armagh

342 ●
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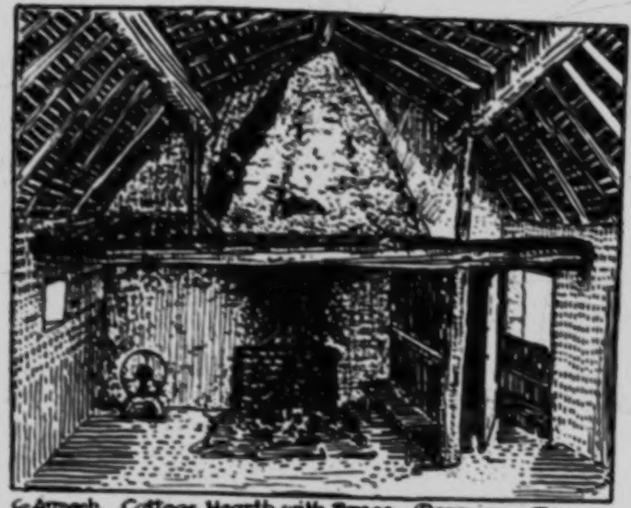
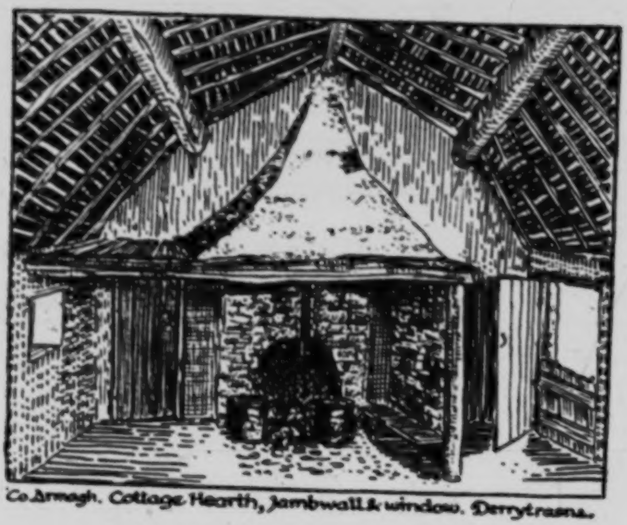
354



Co.Armagh. Cottage Hearth with Brace. Derryinver T.L.

Fig. 27. Note wheel-bellows.



Co.Armagh. Cottage Hearth, Jambwall & window. Derrytrasna.

Fig. 28. Note " jamb-window."

[p. 69]

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342 Ireland, which is the province of the wheel-bellows (Fig. 27)
352 a contrivance which produces a powerful draught under the
fire. Another feature of the fireplace is the small keeping-
holes (" boles ") in the wall, which may contain the clay pipes
or the knitting : they are usually reserved for special purposes
and seem to have their peculiar association with either male or
female use. The alarm clock is often kept in one of these
[305] recesses—on the south side, I have been told, because that is
the side where the sun tells the time—but there are cabins
where the rooster is the only time-keeper, his perch being the
long pole, or, in the old days, the sugán, which crosses the
cabin in front of the fire and which is used in the daytime for
drying clothes.

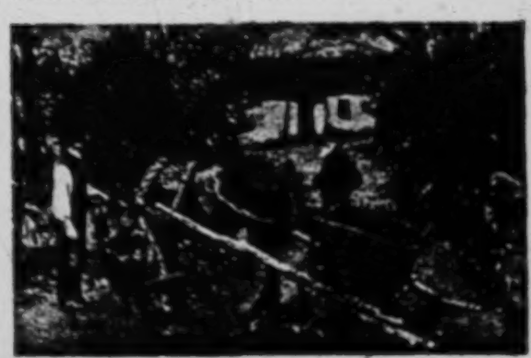
251 Near the fire too is the wooden meal chest or " ark,"
352 where the oatmeal is stored. One of the ancient customs, now
almost dead, is the " tramping " of the meal, the children
[857] being periodically placed in the ark, barefooted, to tread it
down. Alternatively the meal was stored in a large hogshead
immediately behind the chimney, in the " room," where it
would be kept dry without taking up the valuable hearth
space. Under the brace you may perhaps see a lump of bacon
or a dried fish or two, and this is the place where the horse
collar is hung in some districts. We shall return to the other
fireside gear later in the chapter.

354 In some areas, especially in the north and north-west,
that is the province of the gable hearth, the brace and canopy
are rarely seen, their place being taken by a stone or brick
chimney (Fig. 29). It seems probable that houses of the
outshot type, at least, never had the brace, which would be
difficult to erect owing to the recessed side-wall. There are
352 many problems which require study in this connexion. Where
possible the bed, whether half-recessed in its cailleach or not,
lies at one side of the fire : alternatively there may be a large
settle—often convertible into a bed—against one of the
side walls. This is generally a solid piece of furniture, and I
have seen some very attractive examples of bog-oak.

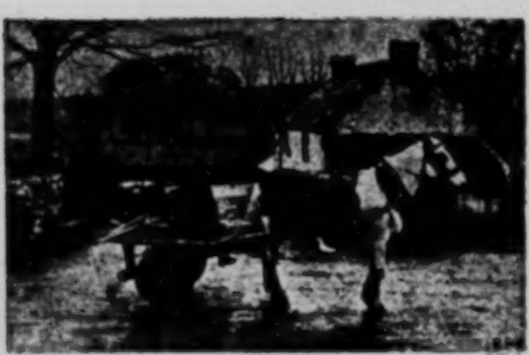
The most noticeable article of furniture in the room is the
dresser, which though generally of deal and lacking the fine

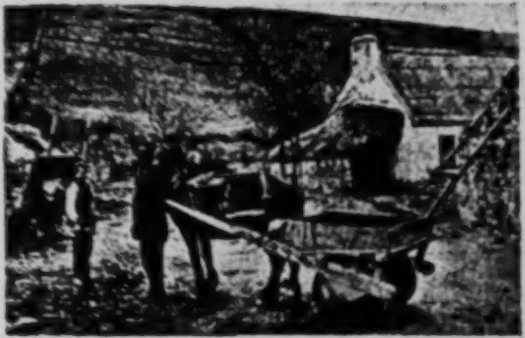
[TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P. 72 --ANALYST]

SLIDE CAR WITH KISH ; STRAW HARNESS

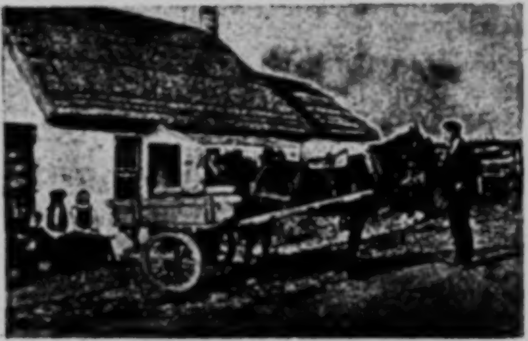


LOW-BACK CAR





BOX-CAR WITH DISC WHEELS



SPOKE-WHEELED CAR

Plate IV.

ALL FROM GLENS OF ANTRIM

[Facing p. 105]

492
493
342

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Antrim

homespun, buttoned up the back, and reaching well below the knees, until they reach the age of ten or eleven years. 291 The dyes for the homespuns are obtained from plants growing on the islands; the orange used for stockings being got from a lichen (*Ramalina scopulorum*); black and brown from the purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*); blue from a small cruciferous plant; and red usually from imported madder, but sometimes from water-lily roots. Alum is used as mordant. [386] [824]

5. *Dwellings.*—A house consists of a kitchen, and one or two bedrooms; and it is, as a rule, built of dry stones without any mortar, 342 ● though this is used afterwards for stopping chinks, and plastering the walls internally. Most of the houses are not whitewashed, with the exception of a belt around the small windows, but lime-washed houses are becoming more common than formerly. The house has two doors, front and back, both opening directly into the kitchen: and the windows are situated only on the front of the house; they are of very small size, and seldom made to open; yet, often, small as they are, they are nearly filled up, so as to leave only from six inches to a foot square of glazed surface. The chimneys and fireplaces are of the usual type found throughout the rural districts of Ireland, except that [354] in some cases the chimney, after rising perpendicularly nearly to the top of the wall, turns outwards and opens as a square hole in the gable. The roof is straw thatch, laid on over "scraws" of grass turf, and held down by a net-work of sougans (straw ropes), to the ends of which heavy stones or long pieces of timber are attached. [284] The gable of the house is stepped, so that the thatch when laid on does not project over the end wall, and is sealed down, to prevent water getting under it at this part, by a plastering of clay.[1] The thatch is put on fresh every year, a new layer being laid over the older ones, until the lowermost layer is thoroughly saturated with smoke, and quite rotten, when the whole is stripped off and used as manure. [241] The floor is of beaten clay in the kitchen, but the bedrooms are sometimes boarded. The most expensive material used in building a house is wood, which is very scarce, and is usually obtained from drift wood, washed up after a storm, in which way large beams often reach the islands. It is owing to this scarcity of material, and the people having to build their own houses, that there are so few outbuildings or cattle-sheds, and that the dwelling-houses are so small. 352 The furniture is scanty, and testifies to the poverty of the people. A few

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[1] "Houses thatched in this manner are called on the west coast *tighthe cruithte*, i. e. 'shaken houses,' in contrast to the *tighthe fuaighte* 'stitched houses,' in which the thatch is tied on by ropes or cords."—REV. E. O'GROWNEY.

241 The manures used are mainly sea-weed and farmyard manure.
In the mountains the practice of burning the land is common.

The pasture is fairly good, but the cattle and sheep are inferior,
231 though efforts are now being made to improve the breeds.

An average family has a couple of pigs, a cow or two and some sheep, a large number of fowl, geese and ducks, and a donkey or horse.

The fuel used is turf obtained from the bogs, which are extensive,
372 except in the southern part of the Mullet; and the islands which have
now no turf of their own import from Achill or Ballycroy.

A very considerable quantity of kelp is made, on which, in the
381 Mullet, a royalty is charged by the landlord. About Portacloy there
is no royalty paid.

Fishing employs many of the men, though until lately the fish
226 taken was merely for home use. The kinds usually caught are
turbot, mackerel, ling, cod, and herrings; all of these, except the
turbot, are now cured at the fishing stations established at several
parts of the coast by the government. For home consumption, much
[251] is eaten fresh, but a good deal of it is roughly salted for winter
use.

Lobsters are mostly taken by the men of Inishkea, and by a
couple of boats at Portacloy. The Inishkea men, while at this
[342] fishing, mostly live in very primitive huts on Inisglora, where they
stay away from their families for six weeks or two months at a time.
[435] The lobsters are sold in Belmullet for about five shillings per dozen,
and are sent by car to Ballina and thence to England. The lobster
pots are mostly of home manufacture.

The fishery stations mentioned above now afford employment to many who formerly had no means of disposing of their surplus time and fish.

Large quantities of eggs are exported from this district, Belmullet
439 being the largest egg exporting centre in Ireland. They are brought
235 into the town by the country people and sold to dealers, who, when
they have collected a sufficient quantity, send them on to Ballina,
whence they are sent to England. Butter is also exported in the
[234] summer and autumn.

Illicit distilling is carried on to some extent in this district,
273 though not at all so prevalent as formerly. The stills are made in the
people's homes by travelling tinkers who live with the family until
the job is finished.

286 A good deal of homespun is made, but the dyes are not obtained

291 the town, where they sit down by the roadside, and put on their boots and stockings, taking them off again when starting for home.

The old-fashioned frock or kilt-shaped garment, made of red or grey homespun, and buttoned up the back, is still worn by boys up to twelve years of age.

The dress of the women is on the whole less changed than that of the men. Many of the elderly women wear the white-frilled cap, others have a small red kerchief tied under the chin. Over the shoulders a shawl of tartan or other striking pattern is folded, but this is not so frequently of a bright red, as in other districts, as the darker colours seem to be more in favour; beneath the shawl is a boddice of some dark material. The petticoat is short, but is only occasionally the typical red homespun of the western peasant. It is often grey, or dyed purple, blue, or some other bright colour, and is sometimes ornamented by a few rows of black braid. Aprons of check are much worn. Many of the older women wear the heavy blue cloak with cape and hood on Sundays and holidays. The younger women to a large extent copy modern fashions on festive occasions, but the result is not happy, as their taste in colours is curious, and they certainly look better in native costume.

A great variety of homespuns are made in the district, there being
286 several weavers who turn out coarse flannel, tweeds, and friezes,
some of which are very good specimens of hand-loom work. The dyes
386 are nearly all imported, indigo and the made-up aniline dyes being
[824] most used. Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), which was at one
time pretty generally employed for this purpose, is now only used for
dying stockings.

5. *Dwellings.*—The habitations of the people present considerable
● 342 variety, some being extremely poor, others of a fairly good class. The
description given below applies solely to the houses of the people of
the rural parts, and not to Belmullet (which is a cleanly and well-built little town, composed almost entirely of good-slated houses of
two stories) nor to the houses of the proprietors or large holders.

Of late years there has been much improvement in the style of dwelling, but few indeed of the old turf cabins remain; while the semi-subterranean huts, some of which were inhabited in 1841, have become altogether extinct.

The *Parliamentary Gazetteer* (1846) describes the majority of dwellings as being built partly of stone and partly of turf, and consisting of only one or at most two rooms.

An average dwelling now is built of stone, sometimes dry, at others cemented by "dobe" or tempered clay, or sometimes mortar. It generally consists of two apartments, the kitchen and the "room." The kitchen, which is usually of pretty large size, is used as the living room; it has a floor of beaten clay. This room has one, or perhaps, two windows of small size, and seldom made to open. These are always glazed now-a-days, but in the last century they were covered with oiled sheepskin. The house has two doors, both of which open directly into the kitchen, and are situated about two-thirds of the way from the partition wall of the two apartments. 342

The end of the kitchen farthest from the fire is used as a pen for the cattle and pigs. The fowl roost where they can, often on the backs of the cattle. [231]

Above the beams or couples in this part of the kitchen boards are sometimes placed, making a sort of loft, in which fishing and boat tackle, agricultural implements, and other articles are stored.

The fireplace is built against the partition wall between the kitchen and the room. It consists of a stone hearth backed by a "hob," also of stone, built out slantwise behind it to make the fire draw well. This class of house has no chimney, the smoke escaping through a circular hole in the roof immediately above the hearth. [354]

"The room" is a smaller apartment than the kitchen, (measuring about 12 feet by 10 feet) it has one or two small windows, and the floor is sometimes boarded.

The furniture of the house is poor and scanty, that of the kitchen consisting of a bedstead, rudely made up of drift-wood, two posts being driven into the floor, a longitudinal piece uniting these and two cross-beams at head and foot resting by one end on the posts, and having the other built into the wall. Sometimes it is built up into four-poster shape and has curtains. The bedding is composed either of feather ticks, or, with the poorer people, of straw, covered with coarse sacking. The bedclothes are often very dirty. There is a dresser covered with earthenware plates, cups, and jugs of a poor and cheap description, a table, two or three chairs, and a couple of forms or settles. A long straw rope is usually stretched across the apartment to hang clothes to dry on. Worsted when spun, nets, &c., are hung from the couples. 352

"The room" contains one or two beds of the sort described, a chair or two, a table (in some cases), and a large chest.

The domestic utensils consist of the usual three-legged pot, a griddle, a gridiron, and sometimes a pot oven, a few staved wooden piggins, a boran or sheepskin sieve, and, in the mountains and islands, a quern, now only used usually for grinding barley for cattle food, 415

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

415 though it may be put to the less innocent purpose of preparing malt
for poteen, and a spinning-wheel of the usual type. For light at night
373 modern lamps are coming into use, but in many houses the "flare" is
used. It consists of a rude sconce, in which is fastened a cylindrical
reservoir for oil, closed at the top by a lid, and having a spout like
that of a coffee-pot, through which the wick is drawn. Rush lights
are still used by some.

The house is often whitewashed outside; the roof is thatch, of
342 straw in most localities, but on the islands, and some places in the
peninsula, bent is use instead. This is laid on over "scraws" of grass-turf
and fastened down by sougans (straw ropes), the ends of which
may be attached to pegs driven into the walls, or have long pieces of
[284] wood or heavy stones fastened to them. These ropes are often arranged
in a net work so as to hold the thatch more securely. Coir rope, bought
in Belmullet, is now used by some instead of sougans. The gable is
stepped or cut away so that the thatch does not project over the end wall.

There are several other types of houses, though the style just described is the most common. Most of the newer houses and those building have chimneys, pig-styes of turf or stone, and in some cases byres. Few of the old one-roomed dwellings, built partly or altogether of turf, are still to be seen, but there are a number of one-roomed huts of stone, many of which have no windows.

The most primitive habitations in the district, and perhaps in Ireland, are the rude huts (*boolies*) on Inishglora, inhabited during the lobster fishing season by the men of Inishkea; they are about a dozen in number, rudely built of dry stone and thatched with "scraws." There is not room to stand upright in them, the height from floor to roof being about 5 feet. Internally they contain a rude bunk filled with straw for sleeping in and a few large stones to sit upon. Cooking appears to be done out of doors. Successive batches of men live in these huts for about three months of the year. Some of the poorest houses on the mainland are in the isolated and primitive village of Fallmore, where few of the dwellings have windows and few or none chimneys. The houses on the islands are decidedly among the best in the district. Many are whitewashed inside, and the furniture is of a superior class, abundant material being thrown up as drift wood. The beds are four-posted structures, with flat board tops, and some of them have bright-coloured curtains, and the bedding is clean and tidy-looking.

489 6. *Transport.*—Lying as it does far from towns of any size, and
separated from the nearest by a wide stretch of wild and thinly-

[p.205(c)]

311 bor, and then with no break to Cloonamore on the east side.

This island has a planned landscape.
311 The roads of the commonage pastures
657 and peat bogs have been built under
relief schemes and the farms include
seven acres of improved land, "striped"
or defined by the Congested Districts
Board after the land was acquired from
its owner, Mr. C. Allies, in 1907.[10]
● 342 Since then new houses of concrete, with
511 a concrete floor, roofed with asbestos
657 slate or, rarely, ordinary slates, have

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[10] Congested Districts Board for Ireland, 18th report for the year ending March 31, 1909, Cmd. 4927, p. 139. The price paid was £8301, including £401 for tenants' interests. Up to March 31, 1915, £7047 was spent on the island, 23rd report, 1915, Cmd. 8076.

342 been built for almost the entire population.
511 In 1893 it was said that there
were no outbuildings or cattle-sheds,
[657] so that peat was stacked in a corner of
the cottage with the fowls roosting on
it, the pigs in a pen beside the fireplace,
the cattle in a pen at the other end of
the room, and the farm implements and
fishing tackle in the rafters.[11] Now the
[343] old houses are the outbuildings, still
thatched, with oat straw (not rye as
formerly) laid on sods and tied down
with home-made straw ropes weighted
with large stones. Only five thatched
houses were still inhabited in 1954.
Some of the thatch has sprouting oats
and some of it is rotten, but, when a
roof is beyond further repair, it is all
stripped off and the sodding and thatching
begins again. Happily, corrugated
iron is not used as it cannot stand the
weather.

FARMING

Agricultural practice is almost uni-
241 form: an acre or so is divided between
oats, potatoes, and—in a few cases—
barley, and there is generally a small
patch of turnips, mangolds, and, less
frequently, cabbage (Fig. 2). Onions,
carrots, and parsnips were rarely seen.
The ground used for crops is called the
"garden," and its fertility is maintained
by using animal manure and seaweed,
and also by rotating the crops. Strange
(or "foreign") seed is favored, and
[657] bought at a cheap rate under a government
scheme. The remainder of the
farmstead consists of a varying amount
of meadow, generally 1–3 acres, and
some pasture. The precious crops are
carefully walled, but some of the farmers
[231] open their fields to the cattle and
sheep after the harvest, partly as a
231 means of natural fertilizing.

439 Each farmer has one or two cows and

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[11] C. R. Browne, *op. cit.*, p. 355.

361 arranged in some semblance of order along a road, but they are likely to be late colonies or the result of land re-distribution. As a visitor during the famine years wrote: 'The villages in which the greater portion of the people (of western Ireland) reside . . . consist of collections of hovels . . . grouped without regularity, formed of clay, or loose stone with green sods stuffed into the interstices'.[1] A little earlier, in 1839, the people of Achill Island are described as 'living in little cabins built in loose clusters varying from twenty to eighty in a cluster: these clusters or villages are sixteen in number'.[2] Still earlier, in 1802, Donegal is said to have had about 500 'villages', which were, however, 'dispersing daily into separate habitations and holdings'.[3]

The absence of any discernible plan as compared with many
361 English or German villages has led visiting critics to regard
● 342 the clachan as a reflection of the disordered Irish mentality. The word that best fits the untidy house cluster is one often heard in Ireland—'throughother'—which is properly applied and probably owes its origin to the scattered plots of the openfield (Fig. 6). Despite this apparently casual disorder the selection of a house-site was a matter for the most careful deliberation. Shelter from the prevailing winds was a prime need, so that the houses seem to snuggle together, generally located in a hollow or on a lee slope. To this end a man might throw his hat into the air on a day of wild winds and mark its falling place. But it seems it was at all costs necessary to avoid giving offence to the fairies by building across one of their 'pads'. In Tyrone it is said that 'no man would build a house till he had stuck a new spade into the earth'. If the fairies had not removed it overnight the site was safe.[4] In Cavan I was told that a small line of stones was first built on the site: if it was intact next morning the fairies were not displeased. The ill-luck which dogged the person who had inadvertently built his house across a fairy pad is one of the many themes which crop up in the stories one hears throughout the country.

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[1] J. Pim, *The Condition and Prospects of Ireland* (1848), 116.
[2] Edward Newman in *The Magazine of Natural History* (1839), 569–77.
[3] James McParlan, *Statistical Survey of the County of Donegal* (1802), 64.
[4] Rose Shaw, *Carleton's Country* (1930), 15.

century we find a description from Ulster: 'In the bosom of the 221 Mourne Mountains there is a place called the Deers' Meadow to which great numbers of poor people resort in the summer 234 months to graze their cattle. They bring with them their wives, children and little wretched furniture, erect huts, and there live . . . and often cut their turf.'[1] A century later a fuller account of a more complicated transhumance, reminiscent of the Norwegian seaboard, comes from Donegal: 'It often happens that a man has three dwellings—one in the mountains, another upon the shore, and the third upon an island, he and his family flitting from one to another of these habitations . . . This change usually takes place upon a fixed day, the junior branches of the family generally perform the land journey on the top of the household goods with which the pony may often be seen so loaded, and at the same time so obscured, that little more than the head can be observed; and thus the chair or two, the creels, and the iron pot, the piggin, and the various selected et cetera . . . creep along the roads.'[2] The author goes on to comment on the restrictions imposed on the comfort and possessions of the peasants by their 'Arab mode of life'. In Achill Island too the movements were complicated, involving the entire population which, having moved to the summer pastures and sowed their corn, returned to the permanent coastal village for the high summer to fish and went back to gather the harvest at the booley in the autumn.[3]

For the most part we are dependent on folk tradition for details of booleying. The Ordnance Survey Letters written in the 1830s contain valuable material from Counties Antrim and Londonderry, and the following extract relates to the parish of Dunaghy: 'Some of the very old men of the country recollect [342] ● seeing the boliehouses inhabited. They were built of sods upon a foundation of earth and stones and were thatched with heath. Many of the poorer sort lived here in summer grazing the cattle [262] upon land that nobody appears to have claimed and supporting themselves upon their milk and blood which they took from [511]

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[1] W. Harris, *The Ancient and Present State of the County of Down* (1744), 125.

[2] Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 24.

[3] An account by Sir William Wilde, written in 1836, is contained in Wood-Martin, *The Rude Stone Monuments of Ireland* (1888), 238.

221 | them occasionally. To render the latter more palatable they
234 are said to have mixed it with the leaves of the wild sorrel.'

[262] In Achill a few old people still nostalgically accompany their
[511] cows to the old booleying grounds, but everywhere else the
system has died out completely. Many hilly districts, however,
are open runs for summering stock which are visited periodically
or placed in charge of a herd. This system was prevalent in
the early nineteenth century and is thus described in the
Ordnance Survey Letters for County Londonderry, parish of
Upper Cumber. 'Herds are partially employed, males and
females indiscriminately, who tend the cattle in the summer on
the moors and mountain farms. They are from ten to sixteen
years old and are paid for that half year from 15s. to 21s. In
winter they return to their parents, who are burdened with
their support from November to May.' In theory the total
number of grazing units in a commonage is calculated and the
units allotted to each landholder in proportion to the size of his
farm—originally to his share in the openfield. The unit is
[804] known as a collop (in Ulster and Mayo a sum—the Scottish
equivalent) and is the amount of pasturage that will support
a cow. The sums may be taken up by other animals, and a
scale which varies slightly from one district to another gives
the equation. Thus a sum equals three parts of a horse, four sheep,
eight goats or twenty geese. With the decline in the utilization
of the hill-pastures and the general breakdown of traditional
practices, grazing rights on commonages are neglected and
stinting is rarely operative.

The observant walker in the hills will notice in sheltered
hollows by the banks of streams clusters of grassy mounds
set in a green sward, or it may be small piles of stones under
some rocky outcrop. These are the only tangible relics of the
[361] booley houses, and in most parts of Ireland they were deserted
[342] so long ago that the shepherd will tell you they are the remains
of Danes' houses.

Only where the huts were stone-built are the remains easily
342 recognizable. In Achill Island they are oval in shape, or rec-
361 tangular with rounded corners, and many have the opposite
doorways which are still characteristic of the winter dwellings.
In some bogland areas where place-names and traditions tell

of booleying there are no discernible traces, for the flimsy 361 constructions in such sites, built without stones, have been buried under the peat. 342 Frequently the huts were built into a sloping bank of peat or gravel, and the roofs were constructed of bog timbers covered by long strips of sod and thatched with heather secured with ropes. We shall see that long roofing-sods are typical of traditional peasant dwellings to this day, and their use may go back to pastoral origins. It was observed near Newry in 1690 that the cabins were built so conveniently of hurdles and long turf 'that they can remove them in summer towards the mountains, and bring them down to the valleys in winter.'[1] Circular hut-foundations are also found, some built of stones, others of sods, and the former may well have had corbelled stone roofs. The huts are generally in groups of

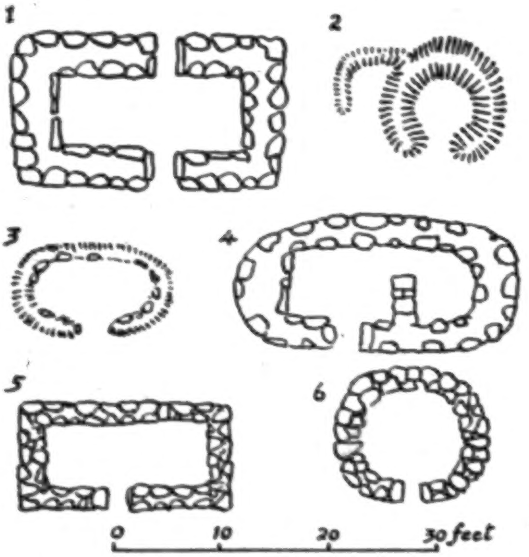

FIG. 7. Plans of booley houses. Nos. 1, 4, 5, Achill Island; Nos. 2 and 3, Mourne Mountains, Co. Down; No. 6, Co. Mayo.

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[1] George Story, *An Impartial History of the Wars of Ireland* (1691), 2nd ed. (1693), 16.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

● 342 361 from five to twenty, either clustered or spaced within calling distance of each other. They are nearly always located near running water, usually near the headwaters of mountain streams, where patches of bright green grass and such characteristic flowers as tormentil may reveal their sites even when almost all trace has gone (Fig. 7).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

IV

THE THATCHED HOUSE

VISITORS to Ireland have not failed to comment on the 342 wide gap which separates the splendid if often dilapidated mansions of the landed gentry from the humble dwellings of the mass of the rural population. This is a characteristic dichotomy which runs through Irish life and goes deep into the Irish past: it was foreshadowed in the distinction between the Gaelic overlords and the tributary tribes who were still in an inferior position at the time of the Anglo-Norman conquest. By English standards the Irish farmer is a small-holder. Substantial farmhouses with some pretensions to architectural dignity are in general restricted to the planted areas and they are few in number compared with the traditional single-storied thatched cabins of the peasantry. These have so frequently been condemned as artless and insanitary that it might be supposed nothing could be said in their favour. Their disadvantages indeed are obvious, and they have given way in many [178] districts to slated houses of cement-blocks or bricks and are doomed to vanish entirely under a wave of thin-walled boxes with garish red roofs. But it is not only sentimentalists who deplore their disappearance. With their passing, writes Robin Flower, something of the old world passes away, 'for the older type of house was in a right harmony with its surroundings, while these high and bare constructions stand in a perpetual contradiction of the whole environment of hill and sea and sky in which they are so violently set down.'[1]

In fact a good deal more could be said in favour of the old styles, at their best providing homes of character, comfort and

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[1] Robin Flower, *The Western Isle* (1944), 46.

342 beauty which vary subtly from one region to another in response to local climates, conditions and contacts. The use of local building materials meant that they fitted into landscapes of which they were literally a part, their clay or stone walls gathered from the earth on the spot, their timbers dug from the bogs, their thatch harvested from the fields. A Swedish ethnographer writes that 'the best Irish thatching gives the finest peasant roof in Europe.'[1] The result of an unbroken tradition was a fine simplicity of style and proportions, with nothing of the vulgar obtrusiveness of the new fashions in country houses, based too often on urban styles and red-brick respectability. Before the famine, houses in the market towns also were very largely of traditional local style save in the central square. Isaac Weld, describing Roscommon in 1832, states that out of its 517 houses no less than 462 were thatched.[2]

Our concern is with the old-style house as a shelter for man
342 and beast and as the vehicle of family lore and regional tradition.
362 In the crowded clachans limitations of space and the fact that
231 diarying was mainly practised in the summer booleys go far to explain the absence of separate byres or dairies. Sanitation was of the crudest and closets unknown. It is these aspects of Irish rural life that have most readily aroused the amused indignation of the critics and the defensive wrath of Irish patriots. As we read in an earlier description of the Western Isle:[3]

> At one of th' ends he kept his cows,
> At th'other end he kept his spouse.

The custom of housing man and beast together has been very general among pastoral peoples in regions of difficult climate, whether in Highland Britain or the European mountain zone. Parts of Ireland, however, have long had a different type of house giving more family privacy: in the lowland parts of Leinster, East Munster and South Ulster the house with central chimney and fireside partition did not easily allow of the keeping of livestock in the house, and one is inclined to regard

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[1] Åke Campbell, *Folk-Liv* (1937), 228.
[2] Isaac Weld, *Roscommon* (1832), 307.
[3] W(illiam) M(offatt), *A Description of the Western Isle*, Dublin (1724), Canto 2.

this style as an improvement introduced by English settlers. 342
This central-chimney house with its 'jamb-wall' hearth will be 362
described in the following chapter. In any event, although 231
stray hens, a pet lamb or a farrowing pig may occasionally join the cats and dogs in an Irish kitchen, the keeping of cattle in the house is a thing of the past. Yet it was so recently practised, especially along the Atlantic seaboard, that many existing houses are not far removed from kitchen-byres, a cross partition conveniently converting the byre into a bedroom, store or dairy.

Moreover the shape and internal arrangements of the prevailing pattern of traditional rural dwelling are conditioned by these antecedents. The long rectangular shape was sanctioned by custom and preserved by superstition; a house, to be 'lucky', must not be more than one room wide (Fig. 8). 'Widen the house', I have heard it said in Donegal, 'and the family will get smaller'. The hearth gable of the house was, where possible, dug into the slope of rising ground, so that it would have been difficult to enlarge the house by widening it: it could grow more easily in length. The long shape is also characteristic of humble dwellings in the small straggling Irish towns. Their streets are lined by whitewashed cabins strung end to end interminably; in the 'cabin suburbs' one rarely sees a house that is not aligned along the road. Describing Ballymoney in Co. Antrim about 1830 the Ordnance Survey Letters state that many houses facing the main street had no access to the byres and stables behind, so that cows and horses had to be taken in and out through the house. In parts of western Ireland cows were brought into single-roomed houses within living memory. In Clare Island, Co. Mayo, there were at the turn of the century only five or six houses out of the total of 120 into which the cattle and pigs were not taken at night.[1] Writing of the village of Kilgever near Westport in 1880 an observer states: 'It is a terrible thought that these huge heaps (of manure about the doorsteps) had all been taken from the single rooms, each of which formed a common stye for men, women, children, horses, cows, pigs and poultry.[2]' It is still characteristic of many small farms that the manure heap is not far from the

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[1] C. R. Browne, *Clare Island and Inishturk.*

[2] J. H. Tuke, *A Visit to Donegal and Connaught in the Spring of 1880* (1888), 54

● 342 362 231 front door, for the cows are kept in a byre which is a continuation of the dwelling house, an obvious convenience though there is not, as in the longhouse of Wales and Dartmoor, direct access from kitchen to feeding-walk.

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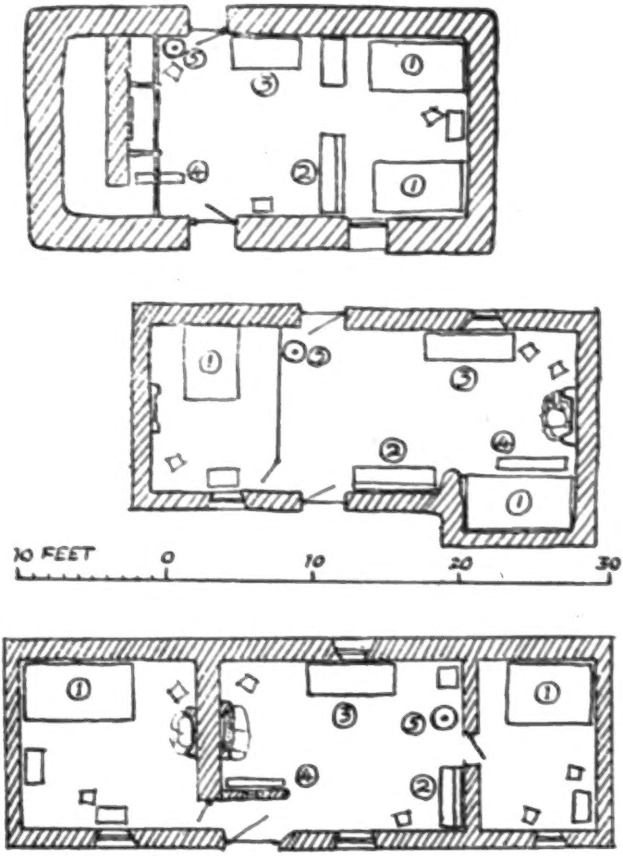

FIG. 8. House plans. *Above:* hipped-roof house, Co. Galway (compare Fig. 13, 2). *Centre:* house with outshot, Co. Donegal (compare Fig. 12, 3). *Below:* house with jamb-wall, Co. Down. (1) bed, (2) dresser, (3) table, (4) bench, (5) churn.

THE THATCHED HOUSE

Poverty and rack-renting undoubtedly contributed to the 342
long survival of such conditions, but they ultimately derive 362
from cultural forces of wide distribution and high antiquity. It 231
used to be said in defence of the custom of sharing the house
with the cow that she helped to keep the house warm and that
in turn the cow yielded more milk. Inquire further and you will
find that it was thought to be unlucky if the cow was not able
to get a glimpse of the fire. Behind this belief there lies faith in [372]
the power of the fire to dispel evil spirits. The end of the house
farthest from the hearth is commonly referred to as the 'bottom-end',
a relic of the time when it housed the cattle, for it was
obviously wise to have the floor sloping down towards the
byre. Many cabins and huts were constructed as lean-tos against
a bog-face or an old fence (ditch). Hence the saying applied, [361]
for example, to the Cappagh district of Co. Armagh, that 'you
can't cross a ditch or you'll fall down a chimney'. It should be [539]
recalled that in Ireland the tenants built and repaired their
own houses with, normally, no assistance from the landlord,
and there was little inducement to build houses to last longer
than the lease of say twenty-one years. Only in Ulster under
the custom of tenant right could outgoing tenants claim recompense
from the new tenants for improvements made.

The simple rectangular shape is a feature of west European 342
house-types from prehistoric times and has characterized some houses of Neolithic age excavated in Ireland. Such houses were usually built of timber, clay or sods (scraws). Circular or oval houses are of similar antiquity, whether made of stone or of wattles, but although a few round-ended rectangular houses survive, the round hut of corbelled stone slabs is used today only as a store place or animal house (Chapter IX). The houses of Achill Island are described by several writers about 1840 as circular or oval in shape, built of boulders without mortar and having the thatched roof continuous with the walls. They had neither chimneys nor windows, and the single door was sometimes not more than four feet high. None of these houses is now inhabited though their ruins can be seen. The round or oval house, however, has probably contributed to certain features of the traditional rectangular-house in some areas, for example the central hearth and the hipped roof which is proper

● 342 to a round-ended house. But there are many missing links in the evolution of the Irish house, which archaeological excavation will hope to find some day. Interpretative studies of Dark-Age texts are also needed.[1]

Clues to old methods of house building may also be found in
342 forms of construction used for outbuildings or in children's
524 games. There is, for example, a Hallowe'en spell or divination
787 game known as 'building the house' in which twelve couples of holly twigs are arranged in a circle, pushed into the ground and tied together at the apex. A live turf representing the fire is placed in the centre. The coupled twigs are named after the boys and girls present, and the pair which first catches fire indicates which boy and girl will first be coupled in marriage.[2] Compare with this a description of Irish houses in the early seventeenth century: 'the baser cottages are built of underwood, called wattles, and covered with thatch . . . of a round form and without chimneys, and in my imagination resemble so many hives of bees about a country farm.'[3]

Today nearly all Irish farm-houses are a simple rectangle
342 in ground plan, anything from ten to twenty feet in width and of varying length according to the number of rooms they comprise, each room being the full width of the house. The normal developed house has three rooms, consisting of a central kitchen with a bedroom at the bottom end and another—the best room, called simply 'the room'—behind the chimney, which helps to warm it (Fig. 8). This, in the Gaeltacht, is the 'west room', reserved for family mementoes, for the old people and especially for the dead. Here the body is placed during wakes, and a wealth of superstition gathers around this room.[4] Arensberg may have been mistaken in translating the Gaelic *iarthar* as 'west', for the word also means 'back', but there are old beliefs about the orientation of the dwelling house, and it is possible that there was an association between death and the direction of the setting sun. The confusion between 'west' and 'back' is amusingly illustrated in the story of the Irish boy who,

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[1] Angus Graham, 'Archaeological Gleanings from Dark Age Records', *P.S.A. Scot.* (1950–51), 64–91.

[2] Lady Wilde, *Ancient Legends of Ireland* (1888), 111.

[3] Luke Gernon, *A Discourse of Ireland, Anno 1620.*

[4] C. M. Arensberg, *The Irish Countryman* (1937), Ch. 1.

when asked why he had not washed behind his ears, replied 342 "'twas too far west!' Death within the year is said to be the fate in Mayo of the man who lengthens a house by adding to the [763] west end.[1] In the old style, as we shall see in the next chapter, houses of more than one storey are rare, though half-lofts or sleeping lofts in the roof lit by a small gable window are fairly common.

A very general feature throughout the north and west is the presence of two doors in the kitchen, one opposite the other (Fig. 8). Only one—the front door—is in regular use: the back door is reserved for days when the wind 'blows contrairy'. Around it more superstition is gathered. A stranger must not be allowed to leave the house by the back door lest he take the [771] luck of the house with him. In the Aran Islands a corpse was always carried out to the graveyard through the back door, [764] and the front door of all houses in the clachan was closed as the funeral procession passed by.[2] The usual explanation of the opposite doors is that they made it possible to regulate the draught for the open fire. This arrangement is characteristic of pastoral areas in western and southern Europe, such as Andalusia and the Roman Campagna. A seventeenth century visitor to Ireland writes: 'the hearth is placed in the middle of the [354] room. The smoke goes through no particular place, but breaks through every part between the sods and wattles of the house, which commonly is no bigger than an overgrown pigstye, to which they have two doors, one always shut on that side where the winds blow'.[3] When chimney flues were added the dispersal of the smoke was facilitated so that the back door tended to go out of use. Nowadays it is often blocked or converted into a window or wall-cupboard. In the traditional kitchen-byre the [231] flagged passage between the doors served as a path for livestock, and the cow was driven out through the back door after milking. I found an interesting relic of this in Co. Armagh, in the custom of taking every new calf, and also any animals [777] purchased at the fair, through the house for luck. In Kerry, 'down to the present day, some houses are the scene of the

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[1] C. R. Browne, *The Mullet*.

[2] A. C. Haddon and C. R. Browne, *The Aran Islands*.

[3] 'A Tour in Ireland in 1672–74', *J.C.H.A. Soc.*, 10 (1904), 96.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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342 morning—and evening—milking of the cows', each animal being driven in turn, in at the front door and out at the back door.[1]

The Census of 1841 estimated that nearly half the families of the rural population of Ireland, then some 85 per cent of the total, were living in the lowest state, in one-roomed mud cabins. In Co. Kerry the percentage was as high as 67 per cent, and in Bear barony in Co. Cork it reached 81 per cent. Although mud houses are now in a minority, many substantial examples remain as well as innumerable decayed specimens. Over many parts of the bog-strewn Central Lowland, where stone is not readily available and transport of materials is difficult, the clay-walled house remains typical. Formerly many single-roomed cabins were made of sods (scraws), especially in boggy country. In Tipperary they were said to be the commonest type about 1780.[2] A few survive. I have seen one in Co. Antrim partly cut out of a bog-bank, housing a large healthy family; and they have been described from other parts of Ireland. Booley houses, we have seen, were frequently built of sods. At its best the mud-walled house can be both durable and comfortable, and many observers warn us not to assume the poverty of their builders. As Arthur Young remarks: 'Before we can attribute such deficiencies to absolute poverty we must take into account the customs and inclinations of the people.'[3]

Mud walls were built up with a fork in layers twelve to eighteen inches deep of a mixture of damp clay and cut rushes which had been left to sour. A stone foundation layer sunk into the ground was usually built first, and sometimes the gable ends, especially if a chimney flue was to be included, were built entirely of stone. They were afterwards trimmed with a sharp spade to a thickness which averages about twenty inches but may be as much as thirty. They had to be of massive construction for stability, and the doors which were cut out subsequently were kept narrow. Similarly the window openings were narrow and placed high in the walls, coming directly under the thatch, so that they resemble eyes glinting below shaggy eye-

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[1] Åke Campbell, 'Irish Fields and Houses', *Béaloideas*, 5 (1935), 57–74, 70.
[2] (Thomas Campbell), *A Philosophical Survey of the South of Ireland* (1778), 146.
[3] A. Young, *Tour*, 2, part 2, 37.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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brows. Thick coats of limewash renewed annually gave protection from the weather and it was essential that the thatch 342 should overhang at the eaves. The roof is typically thatched at the gable, that is, hipped, for it was difficult to build the walls above about six feet high. Alternatively the gables above this height were often finished with turf or sods (Fig. 9). The overhang of the thatch makes the mud-walled house unsuited to the windy coasts of the north and west where the thatch is securely tied down with ropes and trimmed flush with the eaves. Close observation will show the most intimate relationship

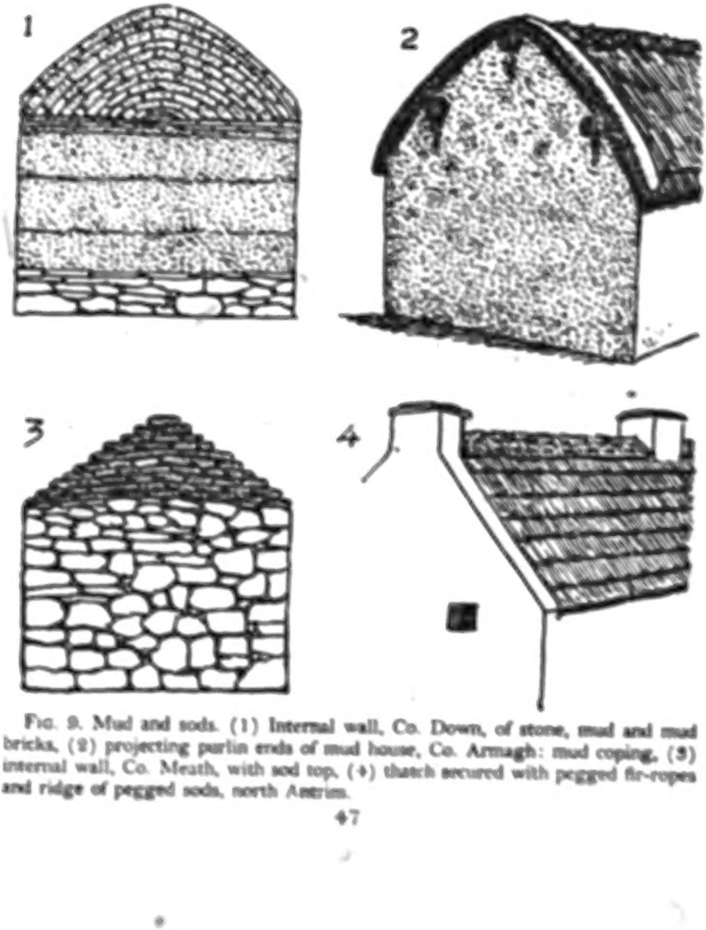

Fig. 9. Mud and sods. (1) Internal wall, Co. Down, of stone, mud and mud bricks, (2) projecting purlin ends of mud house, Co. Armagh: mud coping, (3) internal wall, Co. Meath, with sod top, (4) thatch secured with pegged fir-ropes and ridge of pegged sods, north Antrim.

342 between building materials and techniques and types of thatch, and when slates or tiles are adopted for roofing it will be found that old roof patterns are faithfully followed by local builders. An interesting variant of the mud house occurs around Lough Neagh, where the main weight of the roof is carried on three massive purlins the ends of which can be seen projecting outside the upright gables (Fig. 9). I suspect these houses were built to take tall looms, for the use of purlins means that there are no couple-ties crossing the room, but the distinction between the purlin and the coupled-rafter roof may be fundamental. The purlin-roof may go back to the log house with which it is associated, for example, in Scandinavia. One advantage of the upright gable over the hipped roof is that it made the extension of the house by the addition of further rooms much simpler. It could have been copied from medieval churches or planters' houses.

For constructional reasons, and also because window glass was long a luxury, the windows of the traditional cabin were few and small and placed for preference on the side away from the prevailing winds. Many of the surviving houses, moreover, were built in the early nineteenth century, when tax was levied on the number of windows. The ever-open door, its lower part closed with the additional half-door, admitted most of the light. The half-door is often regarded as peculiarly Irish, but in fact it is an old-fashioned feature which has lived on longer in the
[171] western isle than in Great Britain. It is found in parts of the north of England, for example in miners' cottages in Co. Durham, and it is said to be characteristic of Chinese houses. In Ireland the half-door serves to let in the light while keeping out unwanted animals, and it makes a convenient arm-rest for purposes of conversation or contemplation. This is how a countryman justified it to me: 'A man standing at the open door would be wasting time, but leaning on the half-door he is just passing time'. To give maximum efficiency, the window openings widen internally, an arrangement behind which there may be a lingering tradition of defence against unwelcome strangers. At any rate most of the light came from the doorway, and thus one sees the force of the picturesque phrase referring to the unwanted visitor as one who 'darkens

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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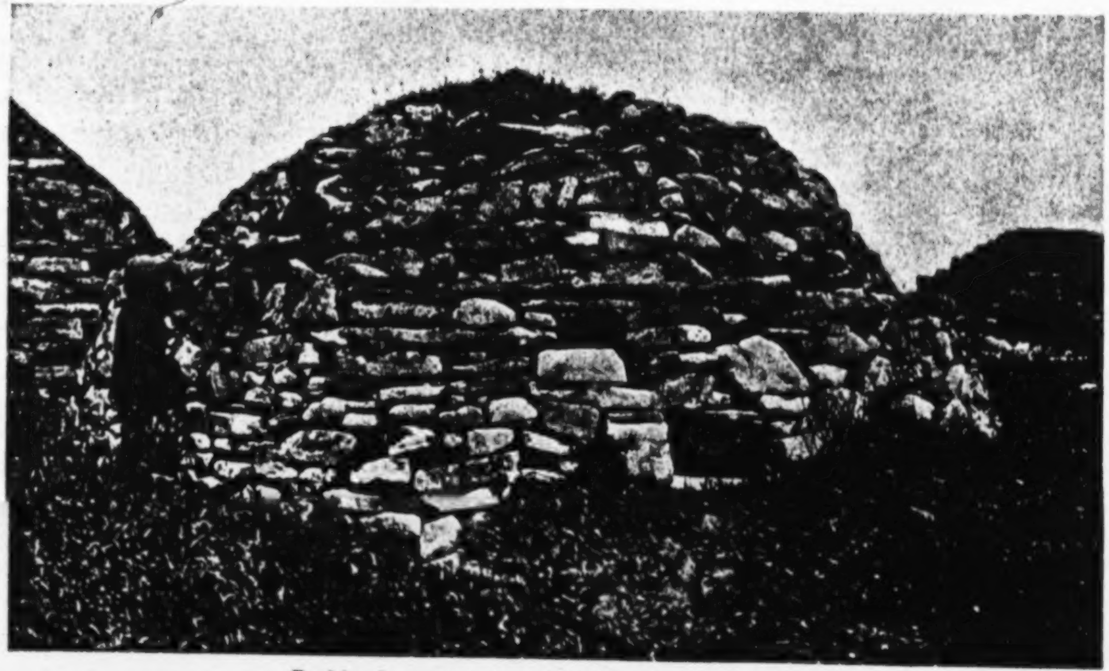
PLATE 3

[facing p. 48]



Beehive house (clochaun), Irishmurray, Co. Sligo.

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the door'. A wattle frame, a handful of straw or a dried sheepskin served as a substitute for glass, and it is remembered in Co. Fermanagh that a mare's cleanings (the placenta) best served the purpose. My informant added significantly: 'No bayonet would go through it'! In one Donegal parish in 1837, according to a petition sent by the school teacher to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, there was 'not more than ten square feet of glass in windows in the whole (some 1,500 houses) with the exception of the chapel, the school house, the priest's house, Mr. Dombrain's house and the constabulary barrack'.[1] 342 [237]

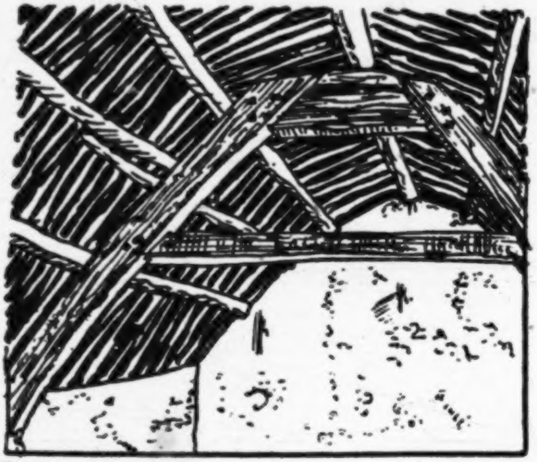

Fig. 10. A coupled roof of bog-oak, Co. Donegal, the ridge rounded against the wind (compare Fig. 12, 3).

Details of the roof-frame of the long house show many minor variations from place to place, but as a general rule it is composed of coupled rafters traditionally of bog-oak chosen for its strength as well as from the scarcity of live oak trees (Fig. 10). A house is measured, not in feet, but by the number of bays it contains, a bay being the distance between the couples, which is standard in any one district. There is some evidence that the

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[1] Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 16.

342 coupled roof was borrowed from the frame-house introduced by English planters: it may, however, have evolved from the wattled house if this was supported, as seems likely, by crucks. The coupled rafters are joined by one or two cross-ties secured by wooden pins, and pegs driven into the rafters hold in place the long purlins which support a layer of branches or thin laths of bog-fir. On these rests a warm blanket of carefully fitted sods (scraws), an essential element of the traditional roof, keeping out cold and damp and serving as a hold for the rods (scollops) with which the thatch, over the greater part of the country, is secured (Fig. 11). The sod undercoat is an 342

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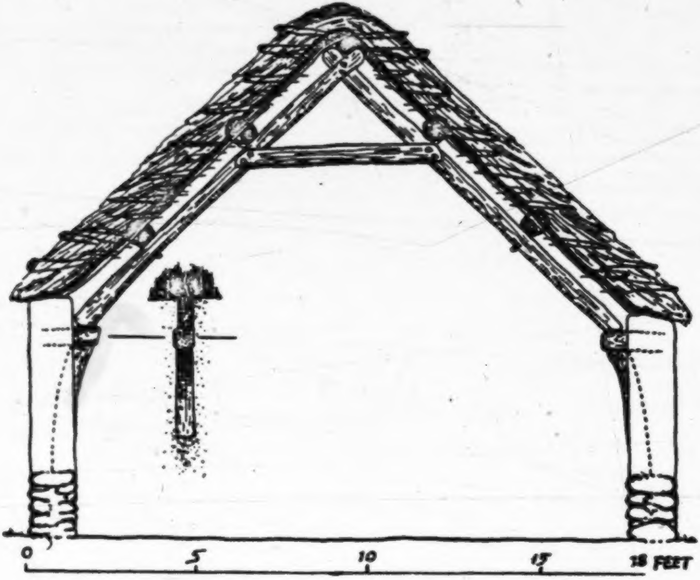

FIG. 11. Cross-section through old house, Maghery, Co. Armagh. The coupled rafters are supported on uprights set in the mud walls. The scraws are sewn to the purlins with fir-ropes. Successive layers of thatch are secured with rods pinned down with hair-pin scollops.

archaic element which overrides all differences in house and roof construction and must be of high antiquity. It has been taken over from an old culture-layer—it finds parallels in

Norway and other sub-arctic regions—and from an economy 342 where straw was not available. We have already noticed that [171] cattle-herders in the early seventeenth century built their booley houses of boughs coated with long strips of green turf. The long sods made a portable roof which could be slung on a pole between two pack-horses.

The sods were cut in strips from carefully selected spots 342 where a close-grazed sward gave a thick mat of grass-roots. 314 They measure two to three feet wide and about one and a half inches thick, and as they were cut they were rolled on to a stick and carried like a carpet. Their roofing sods, wrote Thomas Campbell in 1778, 'they call scraws (they are rolled up like scrolls) but they would be better called hides, for they are flayed off the earth.'[1] In the north, where the flachter or breast-plough was used for paring sods (Chapter X), the scraws might be as much as twelve or fourteen feet long, though short turves were also used. They were carried on to the roof up two ladders and laid on grass upwards, overlapping at the ridge on the side away from the wind. They overlapped laterally also, the scraw on the windward side running over its neighbour on the lee (Fig. 14). In many such details careful attention was paid to the wind and the rain, for example the strongest purlins were put on the side whence driving rain was most to be expected. Similarly the stoutest couples were placed at the weather end of the house, and they were sometimes given a slight inclination towards the wind. A seemingly artless cabin may thus be found to show the most careful adaptation to local conditions.

The first thin layer of thatch was, in some parts of the 342 country, sewn on to the purlins with a thatching needle—the older [413] pattern has a large eye to take hay-rope (Fig. 15)—and the roof might then be finished in one of several regional styles. In the eastern part of Co. Down, and sporadically elsewhere, the straw is laid on in specially prepared bundles or stapples[2] (Gaelic *Stapull*) and the thatch is plastered down at eaves, gable and ridge with clay or mud. A few scollops are added at ridge and eaves. This is probably a very ancient method, [177]

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[1] Thomas Campbell, *A Philosophical Survey*, 146.

[2] K. Danaher, *Béaloideas* (1948), 203–17.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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● 342 177 designed for temporary habitations, for it results, after repeated additions of straw and mud, in an extremely thick and heavy roof. Yet its distribution on the east coast seems to point to introduction from overseas, and in Co. Down it is known as English thatch. One would like to know more about old thatching techniques in other parts of north-western Europe. In Galway a house with mud-sealed thatch is known as a 'shaken house'.[1]

Another way of securing the thatch, which has a limited 342 distribution chiefly along the Antrim coast, we may term the [283] pegged method. Horizontal two-ply ropes made of sally, heather, or the tough fibres of bog-fir roots are laid along the roof parallel to the eaves at intervals of a foot or so and pegged to the scraw with wooden pins which are pushed in upwards so as not to lead water through the roof. A row of scraws is pegged to the rather sharp ridge (Fig. 9, 4). I have observed this style of thatch in south-west Lancashire. Much more widely distributed is the thatch which is found along the north and west coasts from east Ulster round to Kerry, but comes into its own particularly in Donegal, where it gives some of the most attractive roofs in north-western Europe. In Donegal they are rounded at the ridge to throw off the winds, the supporting couples being designed to this end with short cross-pieces breaking the angle of the ridge (Fig. 10). In some [284] districts the ropes, formerly of twisted straw or bog fir but now generally ready-made of sisal, run in both directions to make a complete network; in others the horizontal ropes are omitted because of the obstructing gable-ends which, rising above the thatch, protect it from the winds. The ropes are secured to the walls by means of a row of stone-pegs below each eave. This method of tying is found also in north Mayo, most typically in areas known to have been settled from Donegal in the seventeenth century.[2] Here the horizontal ropes are carried over the gable in steps left for the purpose (Fig. 12, 2). Such roofs are said to be 'stitched': a close mesh may require up to a mile's length of roping. The older method of securing the ropes, from Mayo to Kerry, is to fasten the ends to small boulders

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[1] C. R. Browne, *Inishbofin and Inishshark.* [Text continues on p. 54]

[2] C. R. Browne, *Ballycroy.*

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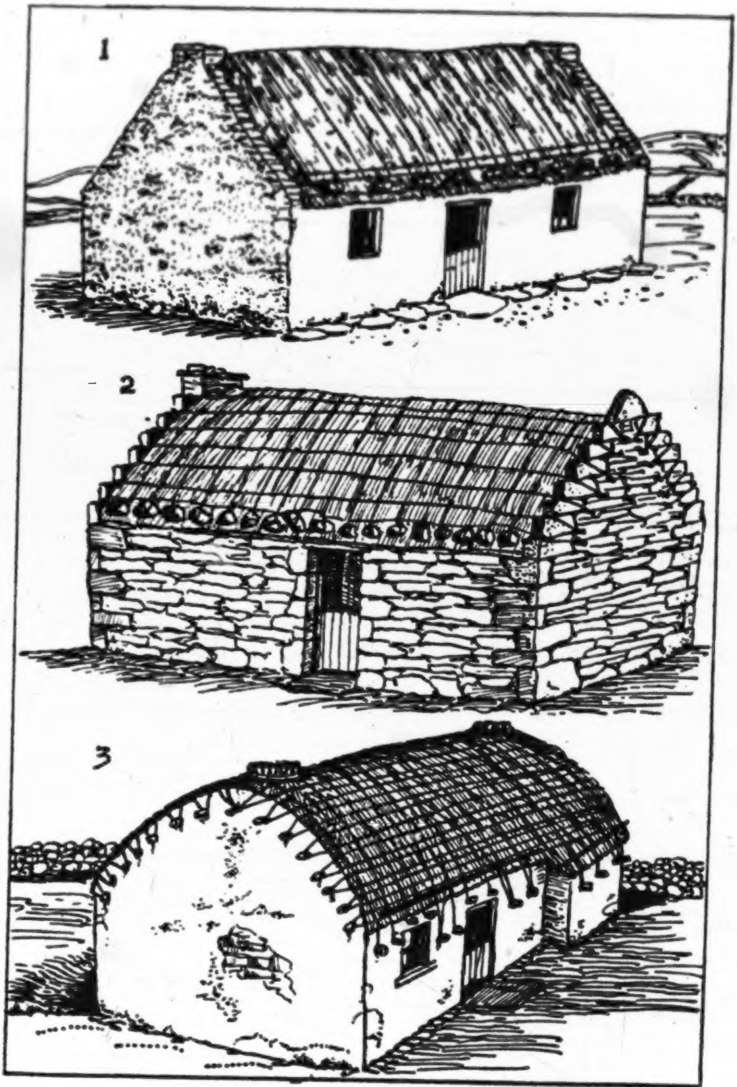

FIG. 12. Roped thatch, western seaboard. (1) Dingle, Co. Kerry. (2) Achill Island, Co. Mayo. (3) Teelin, Co. Donegal.

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342 which rest on the thatch directly over the eaves (Fig. 12, 1). This method has an extremely primitive air but it has the advantage over the pinned ropes in that it is simpler to keep the ropes taut. A still older method, frequently seen on thatched stacks and rarely on buildings, is to let the weighted ropes hang from the eaves. In Donegal a century ago boulders weighing fifty or sixty pounds are stated to have been suspended on hay ropes.[1] This very primitive mode is found also in the Inner Hebrides.[2] Roped thatch in general seems to be characteristic [171] of the Atlantic seaboard of Europe and areas around the North Sea.

The most widely distributed mode of thatching is by means of scollops, or sally rods (sometimes hazel, briar or bog-fir), which pin down the thatch. In well-finished work the rods are hidden, for if exposed they tend to let water seep through the scraw, but it is customary to leave a row exposed at the eaves and ridge and against the gables, where the outer layer of straw should lie snugly. The exposed scollops are often arranged [531] in lattice patterns, and the expert thatcher delights in showing his skill and leaving his grace-mark in finishes of various designs which are practical as well as decorative, serving for example to distribute the rain and prevent 'guttering'. Thus twists of straw (bobbins) at the gables carry the drips evenly to the ground. When the ridge—and sometimes the eaves as well—is also adorned with a row of bobbins the scollop-thatched roof can be most attractive (Fig. 13, 1). A thatched chimney occasionally adds the last finishing touch. The word scollop is derived from the Gaelic, and it is natural to assume that this most widely distributed of all styles—from north Antrim through the heart of the Irish midlands to south Cork—is [171] indigenous. But rod-thatching is widespread in England and on the continent, and it may have reached Ireland with the Celts. There are various ways of pushing in the scollops: they may be thrust in at each end (Fig. 14) or bent into wooden staples resembling large hairpins, which secure the ends of horizontal rods (Fig. 13, 1). The scolloped thatch is perhaps best suited to, and is almost universal on, roofs which are

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[1] *Dub. Univ. Mag.* 41 (1853), 715.
[2] Colin Sinclair, *Thatched Houses* (1953), 36.

[Text continues on p. 56]

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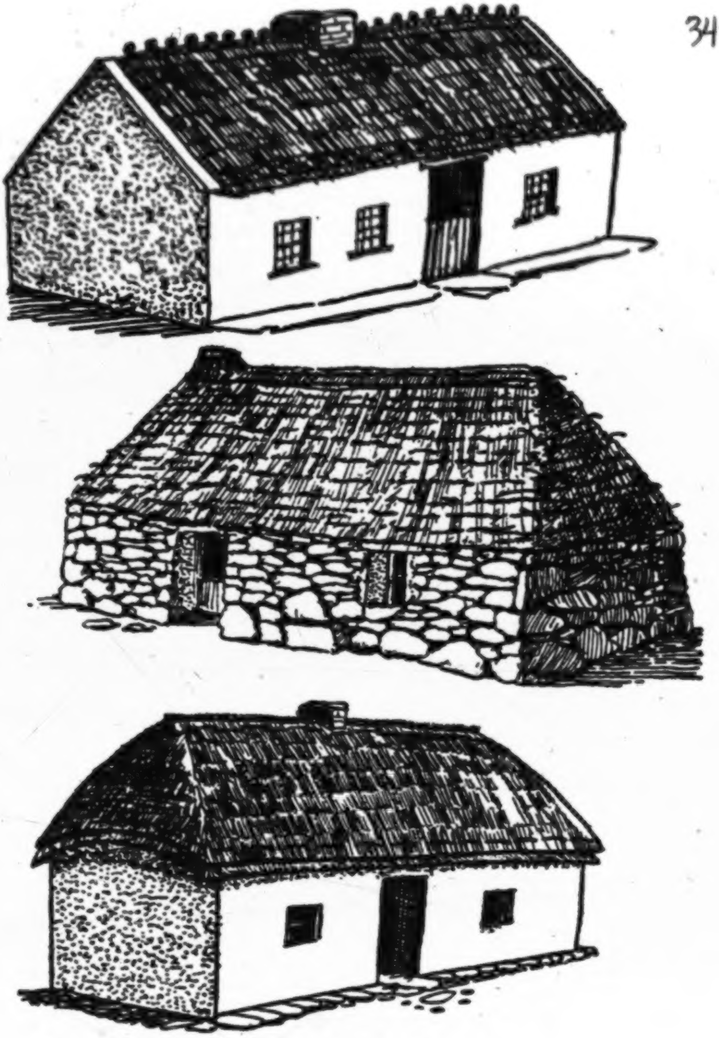

FIG. 13. Scollop thatch. *Above:* Co. Cavan, with ridge of bobbins. *Centre:* Co. Galway, with thatched chimney. *Below:* Co. Tipperary (after R. H. Buchanan).

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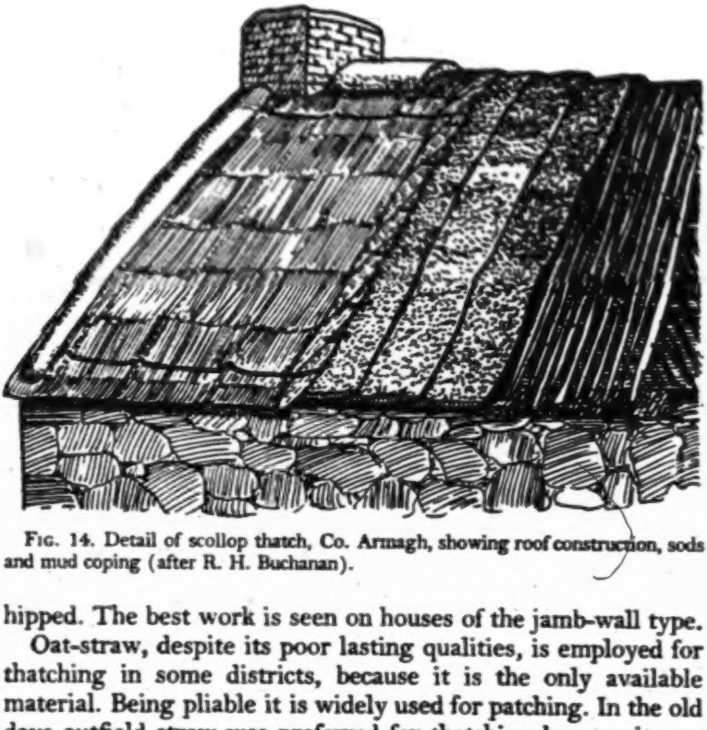

FIG. 14. Detail of scollop thatch, Co. Armagh, showing roof construction, sods and mud coping (after R. H. Buchanan).

hipped. The best work is seen on houses of the jamb-wall type.

824 Oat-straw, despite its poor lasting qualities, is employed for thatching in some districts, because it is the only available
342 material. Being pliable it is widely used for patching. In the old days outfield straw was preferred for thatching because it was tougher than that grown on the infield. Wheat or rye is much
[241] more durable than oat straw and rye is specially grown for its straw in parts of Donegal, where I have known flax also cultivated to provide thatching material. Reeds are fairly commonly employed in the south-west and locally elsewhere if no straw is available. I have seen heather used in north Donegal, and in other areas marram grass, rushes and 'mountain grass' (probably *molinea*). The expert thatcher prefers his straw to be cut with a sickle and thrashed by hand and he scorns machine-thrashed straw. Best of all is straw from which the corn has been removed by hand-scutching or 'lashing' over a stick or stone, the 'barrel' of the straw being thus unbroken (Chapter XV).
342 Nowadays a thatched roof is becoming a mark of sophistication,

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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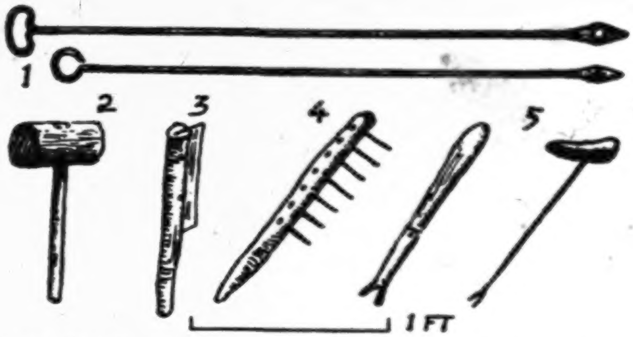
and among the farming population a new roof is hardly ever 342 ●
covered with thatch. The country thatcher finds employment [463]
in patching, not thatching.

The erection of such simple houses as I have described did
not call for the services of specialists. When the need arose the 342
collective skills of a whole community were available, and one 476
can readily see how prescribed methods were handed down in 527
any particular area. 'The custom on such occasions', wrote Lord George Hill[1]—he is speaking of Donegal in the years before the Great Famine—'is for the person who has the work



[413]

FIG. 15. Thatching tools. (1) Needles, the upper one for hay or fir ropes. (2) Mallet. (3) Trimming knife. (4) Rake. (5) Spurtles for stappling and patching. All from Co. Down except the last, from Co. Meath.

to be done to hire a fiddler, upon which all the neighbours joyously assemble and carry, in an incredibly short time, the stones and timber upon their backs to the site, men, women and children alternately dancing and singing while daylight lasts, when they adjourn to some dwelling where they finish the night, often prolonging the dance to dawn of day'. Like all work done in common, the thatching too was regarded as a sort of festival. In the Aran Islands 'from the moment a roof is taken in hand there is a whirl of laughter and talk till it is ended, and, as the man whose house is being covered is a host instead of an employer, he lays himself out to please the men who work with

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[1] Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 40.

● 342 him'.[1] Synge goes on to remark that much of the intelligence
476 and charm of the islanders is due to the absence of a division of
527 labour and to the wide development of each individual. Truly
it may be said that with the disappearance of the thatched house
something more than a picturesque archaism passes from the
land.

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[1] J. M. Synge, *The Aran Islands*, 156.

V

HEARTH AND HOME

THE kitchen and the hearth are the very core of the Irish 354 house, and the turf fire burning continuously day and night, throughout the year, is the symbol both of family continuity and of hospitality towards the stranger. When it goes out, it has been said, the soul goes out of the people of the house. The fire serves not only to prepare food and dry clothes, to bring warmth and comfort to the family and to ailing animals, but also to keep the thatch dry and preserve the roof timbers, so that 'when the smoke dies out of a house, it does soon be falling down'. This is one reason for the persistence of single-storey houses open to the roof, where the turf smoke could circulate among the rafters and keep the scraws and underthatch dry. A 'smoke', in the seventeenth century inventories and to this day among country folk, means a house. In the days before chimneys were adopted the cabins were described as oozing smoke through the thatch so that they resembled 'reeking dunghills'. It should be remembered that the brick or stone chimney flue is a relative newcomer and, as we are constantly being reminded in these days of fuel shortage, a great waster of heat. The chimneyless open fire was much more effective as a house-warmer. The turf smoke, it is true, despite the draught-regulating mechanism of the double doors, must often have been troublesome, but as we shall see the furniture was designed to keep heads low.

Dry peat burns too quickly if the draught is strong, and the fire [372] does best at floor level, glowing on a great stone slab or on a cobbled hearth set in the mud floor. The area immediately 342 around the fire is also paved, but the rest of the old-style

342 kitchen is generally floored with puddled clay which takes a surprisingly well-wearing surface. The housewife will tell you that such a floor raises less dust than one of concrete, and if it [415] tends to wear unevenly this matters little since the cooking pots and some of the furniture which is not built-in has three legs [352] instead of four and will therefore stand firmly on an uneven floor. The rocking chair, despite New England's claim to have invented it, was surely first devised for such a floor. Lime, cowdung or ashes were sometimes added to the floor when it was being prepared, and mud scraped off the road, already well puddled, was considered an excellent floor material.[1] In Armagh, we are told, floors were made by simply digging up the ground and trampling it: 'They sometimes have a dance for that purpose, and many a match comes out of a thing of the sort.'[2] Another method was to keep a flock of sheep moving about the newly spread floor for some hours until it was well puddled. The bottom byre-end of the old-style one-roomed farm house was cobbled, and a flagged walk led from door to door. Devices 231 for tying up the cows were secured to or built into the bottom 353 gable: a variety of stone and wooden fasteners may still be seen in the deserted houses of Slievemore on Achill Island. One writer humorously observes of Co. Galway that the cow had to be tethered lest she should eat the bed-straw, but that pigs and poultry were free to roam.[3] The hens spent the night on a rope or pole hung across the kitchen from eave to eave, and laid their eggs in handsome nesting-baskets of woven straw (Fig. 16). Here we may notice a curious bit of folklore which suggests that hens were carefully looked after for superstitious reasons, as well as for their economic value and for the cockerels' time-keeping. It is said that every night the hens, when they argue among themselves before settling down, are plotting to leave Ireland and fly back to Norway, but in the end they decide to postpone the trip for another day! In Co. Limerick elaborate three-tier wooden hen-coops are sometimes seen in the kitchen, and in Co. Down I have found the sitting

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[1] J. Binns, *The Miseries and Beauties of Ireland* (1837), 1, 112.

[2] Ibid., 186.

[3] T. A. Finlay, 'The Economics of Carna', in *The New Ireland Review* (April, 1898).

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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be placed against the gable or, in the central chimney house, 354
against a partition-wall, and one cannot doubt that the general adoption of chimney flues has been the deciding factor. This innovation, slowly adopted from about the sixteenth century onwards, gave rise in time to many regional styles of chimney breast in brick and stone. I suspect that the wattled smoke canopy (Fig. 18) was the native response to the novelty of chimney flues, but I cannot find that it was adopted outside the areas of strong English influence. The substitution of peat for wood seems to have made little difference to the architecture of the hearth. When coal came to be burnt, however, the fire had to be lifted off the floor, or the hearth fire given a stronger draught by installing a built-in 'fan bellows' which forced air through a tube into the floor of the fire.

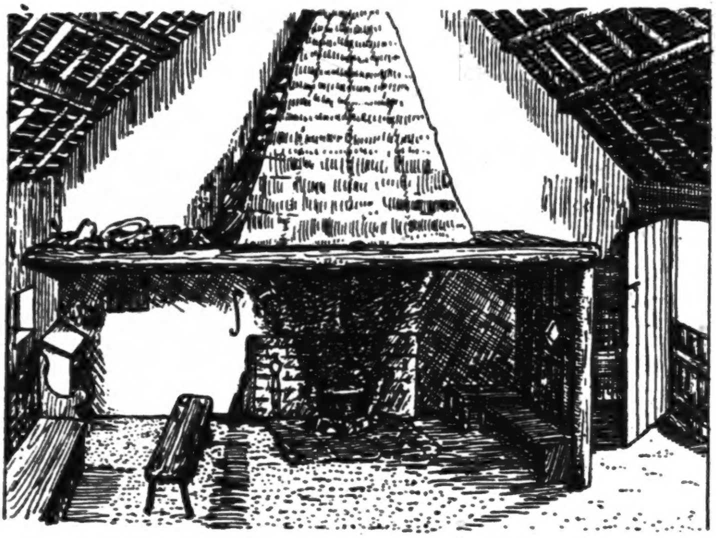
[352]

FIG. 18. Hearth with jamb-wall and wattled smoke-canopy, Co. Armagh. Meal-bin and settle-bed on left.

The wattled smoke canopy or brace (? breast) is still fairly 354
common in houses with central chimney and fireside partitions, 342
mainly in the south and east. The front of the canopy rests on a

354 strong horizontal beam, the brace-tree, which may extend right
● 342 across the kitchen from wall to wall, four or five feet out from
the fire and five or six feet from the ground. Or one end of the
beam may rest on a supporting jamb set under one corner of the
342 canopy. In that case—and invariably where the front door is
353 adjacent—there may be a draught screen of wood mud or stone
—the jamb-wall—built out from the fireside and terminating in the jamb, so as to partition off the fireside. This curtain-wall is pierced by a small window known as the entry or spy-hole, through which an approaching visitor can be spied from the fireside through the open door (Fig. 18). I have seen a few jamb-wall houses of this type in Co. Armagh where the brace-tree nevertheless continued to the side-wall, so that the visitor had to stoop under it on entering the house. If a door is swung on the jamb-post a small hall or internal porch is readily provided. This is characteristic of developed houses of traditional style in the Lagan Valley near Belfast, and a further refinement is to hang a mirror over the jamb-window, a looking glass replacing the plain glass of the peep hole and reflecting changing fashions. The jamb-wall, called also in Ulster the hollan-
[171] wall, is well-known under that name in the south of Scotland
and the north of England and may thence have reached eastern Ireland in plantation times. In Cumberland it was termed the sconce and in Lancashire the speer, which was the name of the screen which crossed the end of the halls in the Oxford colleges. James Walton tells me that in north Yorkshire the jamb post, called the witch post, is occasionally found to be covered with designs intended to protect the hearth from evil spirits. Sprigs of rowan are tied to its top for the same purpose. The partitioned hearth is characteristic of eastern and southern Ireland: it extends into the Central Lowlands but it is almost entirely lacking in the west and in the north-western province of the outshot-house to be described below. Dr. Desmond McCourt tells me that he knows of two or three hybrids—having both the outshot and the partitioned hearth—in the foothills of the Sperrin Mountains, where two cultural pro-
342 vinces meet.

354 The smoke canopy varies in shape and method of construction
from one region to another. The commonest type is made of

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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laths and wattles (willow, hazel or briar), plastered with a 354
mixture of clay and cowdung or ashes and coated with limewash. 342 ●
In parts of the south hay or straw ropes soaked in mud (putogs)
were used, twisted between a frame of horizontal rungs and
plastered over with mud or limewash. In Co. Armagh one [237]
occasionally sees a heron's wing hung on the brace: it is used
for dusting the hearth. The jamb-walls—and internal walls in
general—were traditionally constructed of wattle and daub, or
of mud or wood. The wattle and daub construction is undoubtedly
an old technique which, in the days of plentiful timber, was
much more generally used in house-building. Internal partitions
carried up to the roof, however, probably followed the
adoption of the chimney flue, and if so this innovation must be
reckoned as a contribution to privacy as well as to comfort.
We note in passing that wattlework found its last traditional 342
use in house construction in the wicker doors of the west, and
in the windbreaks of the north, bundles of hazel or birch branches
(wassocks) set up on the windward side of the door. The stone-built
external porch must be regarded as a relatively novel
addition to the traditional house style.

Wooden or stone seats are often built in near the hearth, 352
and the wall behind the fire, protected by a flagstone or a
built-up hob, usually has a keeping hole on each side of the
fire (Fig. 19). Known as boles in Antrim and coves in Cavan,
these may be elaborated in Achill Island, for example, into two-
or three-tier wall-dressers whose ancestry lies in the stone house
tradition of the mountain country. There is an old belief that
the left-hand keeping hole belongs to the woman and the right-hand
one to the man of the house. Here you may see in safe
keeping, on one side the woman's knitting, on the other the
man's clay pipe. Stone dressers were a characteristic feature of [171]
the huts at Skara Brae,[1] where also Professor Childe found
evidence that the women occupied the left side of the fire and
the men the right. In the Hebridean black-houses the left-hand
side of the fire was the woman's quarter.[2] Similarly in the old
turf houses of the Highlands, 'the women were invariably
ranged around the central fire on one side, the men on the

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[1] V. G. Childe, *Skara Brae*, 15.

[2] A. Mitchell, *The Past in the Present*, 52.

canopy, sometimes on both, resting on the brace-tree is a wattled 354 shelf or loft which goes under various names such as, in Ulster, skeagh, hurdle or flake. The double loft in the fireside from Co. Cavan illustrated in Fig. 21 is slatted and floored with reed matting, the reeds being bound together with split briar after the manner of a bee-skep. As the term hurdle would imply, these lofts are frequently made of wattle. The heat could rise through them and keep everything above bone-dry, and this was the allocated place for storing various treasured possessions as well as a great deal of 'trumpery'. Here the rushes [373] were dried in the preparation of rush lights, and here the horse-collar was stored when not in use, a reminder that it was made [492] partly or wholly of straw and must be kept dry.

If we are right in supposing that the wattled chimney canopy 342 is a relatively late feature it follows that we cannot regard the chimney loft as an old element in the Irish house. Yet the loft 353 is a traditional fitting for which there seems to be some evidence in early literature, and the need for storage-space must have led to the utilization of part of the roof space. It seems that the loft over the kitchen which nowadays has often become a bedroom in the roof—lit by a small gable window and entered by a steep stairway or even a ladder—began as a half-loft over the bottom end. This survived in Clare Island into the present century and was used to store tools and dried fish. In Fermanagh the half-loft was the hens' roosting-place, serving [231] to protect the cows from droppings and now transferred with them to the byre. By tradition the loft is the sleeping-place of [513] the children, and the man and woman of the house have their bed near the fire, either in the kitchen or in the bedroom behind the chimney flue.

Nowhere is the relationship between the parental bed and 352 the fire better defined than in the traditional house of the north-west, where a small bed-wing—the outshot or *cailleach*—projects out from one of the side-walls at the chimney-end of the kitchen (Fig. 8; Fig. 12, 3). The distribution of this type of house, north of a line from Cushendun in Co. Antrim to south-western Galway, corresponds with many other north-western cultural distributions, and the area is curiously coincident with that of the oldest rocks in the country, the infertile schists and

[text continues on p. 71]

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County Antrim

PLATE 6

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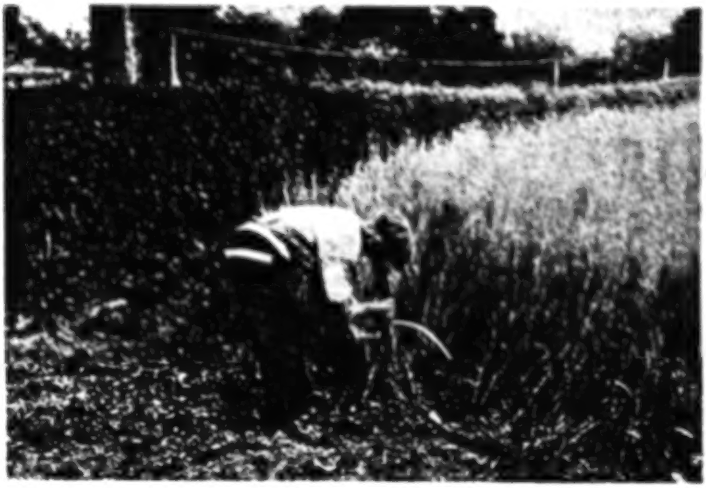

1. Shearing oats with the toothed sickle, Co. Antrim.

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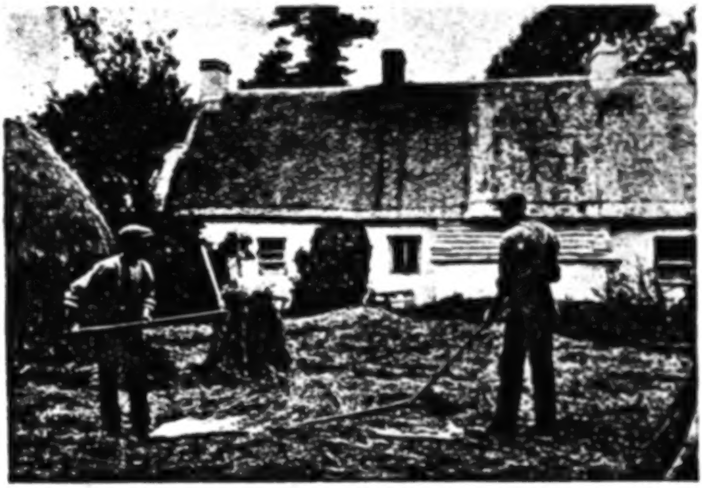

2. Thrashing oats with flails, Co. Antrim.

[facing p. 97]

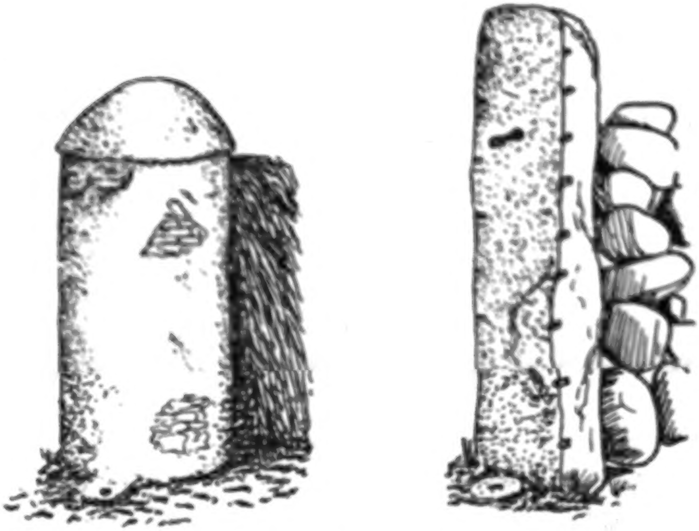

FIG. 55. Gateposts, Co. Down. *Left:* built-up pier with stone hinge and spud-stone. *Right:* granite slab with iron hinge and spud-stone.

[342] The shortage of suitable timber also led to the disappearance of the native wattled house and of the introduced timber-framed house, and the fact that such houses were more combustible (and that wooden gates, as one observer remarked, would have been stolen for firewood) was of less importance. The prototype of the stone piers of the farmyard may perhaps be seen in the great entrance pillars of the fortified 'bawns' erected by the seventeenth-century planters. Yet the style is quaintly archaic, and they have often been compared to miniature round towers. Very stout examples do indeed resemble the stone beehive 'clochauns' which we describe later, except that they are solid. In their construction the method of marking out the circumference and maintaining a vertical line by means of a string attached to a central post which is later removed is primitive enough. Moreover the method of hanging the gate is archaic. It is the harr-hanging which is found also in Scotland, the Lake District, Cornwall and Brittany and has survived in these stony

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957

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County Antrim

PLATE 8

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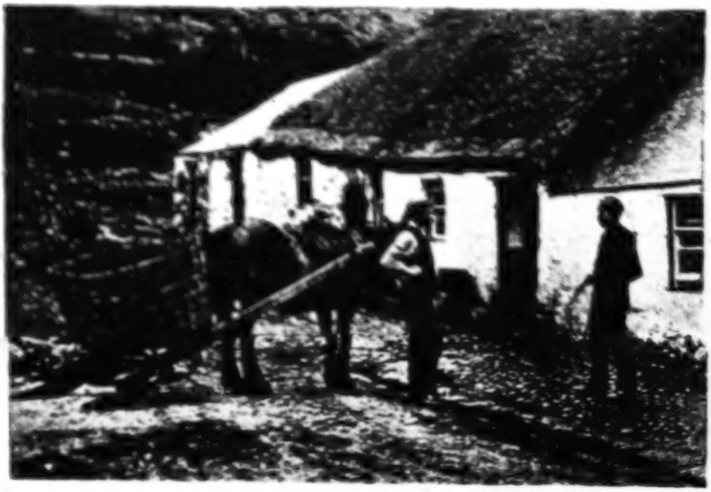

1. Slide-car with peat-kish. Glens of Antrim.

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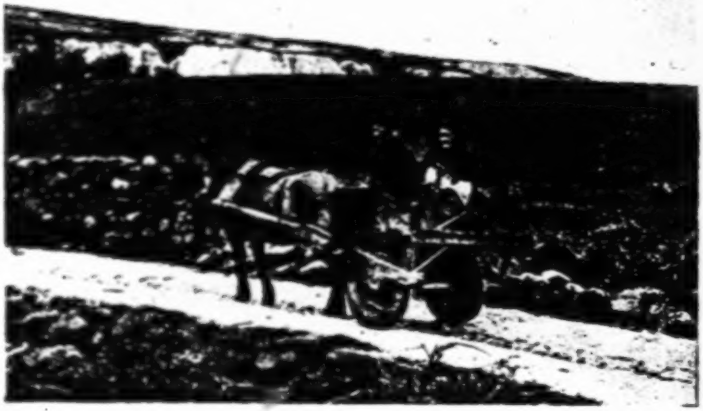

2. Wheel-car, Glens of Antrim.

[facing p. 113]

are repaired and re-roofed with sods, and turf fires lit inside 343
are kept smouldering with wet sods until the spring, when the 387
huts are half-full of ashes and the soot-laden roof-sods are ready to collapse. The roof is then broken up and the soot and ashes spread on the ridges as potato manure (Fig. 39).

Although I know of no parallel in other parts of Ireland it 342
seems likely that the custom of removing the roof-covering of the winter-house was once fairly general, at any rate in houses of the old Achill type, which in many details closely resembled the Hebridean black-house. I should be inclined to correlate the custom with the roped style of thatching, which betrays little of the care of other styles and in the old form where the ropes were weighted by hanging stones had a distinctly ephemeral appearance. Where sods were used for walls as well as roofs the whole house would have become a convenient source of fertilizers for the infield. This may be the explanation of the remark made by Dr. Madden that in the south of Ireland 'cottar houses of dirt, sticks and straw were generally removed once a year'.[1] There are indications met with in excavations of houses in Dark Age raths that reconstructions were more frequent than would be justified by ordinary wear and tear. In Sutherland, down to the early nineteenth century, sod-houses were abandoned periodically and pulled down to be utilized as manure, a new hut being erected near by. In this instance the cause was said to be that the accumulation of filth had rendered the place uninhabitable,[2] but this underestimates the tolerance of the Gael. The soot-houses, at any rate, seem to perpetuate old custom, and one thinks back to the earliest days of agriculture when crops were sown in the highly productive soils of newly burnt woodland. Faith in the use of fire persisted longer than the woods. Burning the land, we shall see in Chapter XI, was a very general practice down to the famine years when rough pasture was being reclaimed for potato-growing.

We come now to a group of stone structures built to serve as 343
kilns for drying or burning. The drying-kilns were principally 251
needed for drying corn before it was ground, though flax-drying kilns were also required in the days when the fibre was extracted

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[1] Dr. Madden, *Reflections and Resolutions* (1738).

[2] Quoted in F. T. Smith, *The Land of Britain*, Part 3, Sutherland.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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PLATE 12

501

1. Curraghs, the Aran Islands.

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● 342

2. Dragging home the hay in the west of Ireland.

[Facing p. 161]

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[231]
[492]

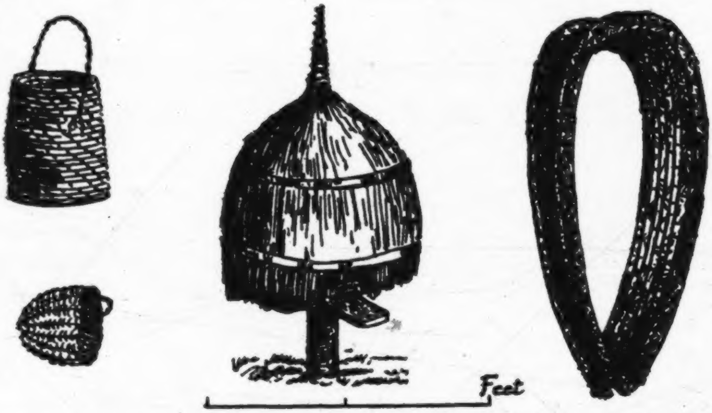

Fig. 69. Coiled food-basket, Aran Islands; calf muzzle, Co. Clare; beehive and horse-collar, Co. Antrim; all of straw except the calf muzzle.

some large rectangular examples seem to be made of built-up plait as described below. The distribution of coiled basketry in western Europe suggests that it is an extension northwards from south European and African regions where it is a richly developed art. A straw underthatch from Co. Down—the only one of its kind I have seen in the north—was made in a simple weaving technique, using straw ropes. But the commonest method of making mats was by what I have called built-up plaiting; beginning with a straw rope twisted on itself, wisps of straw are inserted in every third twist and their ends worked into plait in combination with the combined ends of the previous wisp. Fresh handfuls of straw are regularly inserted into the plaits. They are given different names in various parts of the country; for example, tates in Antrim, kets in Down, and gleogs in Meath.

Such mats can be made of any desired size, and in the past they served many purposes, as hangings to mark off bedrooms or bed alcoves, as linings for the wattled doors of houses, and as mattresses. Their long-continued use with wattled doors on houses of mud or stone carries the suggestion that wattled
● [342] houses of the better class may once have been lined with straw mats serving as draught screens and taking the place of the

hanging skins, carpets or tapestries of other cultures. Today 285
the most familiar use of the plaited mats is as creel mats on the [342]
backs of asses (Fig. 56). When creels are dispensed with and
the load is placed directly on the ass a simple 'sugan' is sometimes 285
made—a ring of straw some fifteen inches in diameter 492
bound with a fine straw rope. This is a variant of the head-wreath once widely worn in western Europe as a carrying pad. Straw collars—made entirely of straw and not merely straw-stuffed—have so recently gone out of use that I have seen several decayed specimens on hill farms in the north, and the art of making them is not forgotten. In their construction several oval rings of three-strand straw plait are stitched together (Fig. 69). Unlike the ordinary Irish horse collar, they are, of course, not made to open; they were carefully shaped to hold flattish wooden hames.

Many varieties of baskets of straw rushes and other pliant 285
materials which were once made in the homes are now known
only by name: for example, the puckan of built-up plaiting which 415
held seed potatoes in Co. Down, or, hung in the stable, served as a nest for pigeons. They had short lives, and few specimens have survived, so that we shall never know the full range of such domestic skills. On the other hand fancy basket work, using both whole and split fine sally rods, has probably long been a specialized craft, and has clung to certain districts such as the shores of Lough Neagh and the Suir Valley. As in these areas so all around the coasts of the island it is a craft which accompanies fishing skills. The long-line fishermen of the sea coasts have traditionally made their own line and fish baskets, but it is only inland communities such as those mentioned who have become commercial basket-makers, possibly because their fishing was more seasonal than that of the sea folk. Their products are now mainly baskets for carrying potatoes or turf (Fig. 71). In a special class are the large creels and carrying baskets made of hazel or black sally which were generally employed for farm transport before wheeled carts were adopted. In many districts these were made by itinerant creel-makers who were held in very low esteem, next above the hackler and the tinker. The method of construction, in which the standard rods are stuck upright in the ground, stamps the craft as being of

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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County Clare

773 reddened all the lake. As the wounded being floated away she
776 wailed :—

> " As the water maid floats weak and bloodless down the stream
> So the O'Briens shall go from Killone."

Prof. Brian O'Looney heard in his youth, and told me, a tale nearly identical :—

> " As the mermaid goes on the sea,
> A wretched victim devoid of flesh and blood,
> So shall the race of O'Brien pass away
> Till they leave Killone in wild weeds."

The lake, like the stream already noted at Caherminaun, turns red at times from iron scum and red clay after a dry summer. [823] This is supposed to be caused by the local Undine's blood, and to foretell a change of occupants in Newhall. Strange to say, I saw it happen last when the place was let by the MacDonnells to the O'Briens. The cellar at Newhall has its outer section roofed with large slabs, and the inner consists of long, low, cross vaults. In the end of the innermost recess is a ● [342] built-up square patch, which sounds hollow, and is said to show the opening closed to keep out the thievish mermaid. There seems no evidence of any stream running underneath the cellar, but local tradition tells of a vaulted passage down to the lake.

776 Sruhaunaglora (prattling brook), in Kilseily on the flank of the eastern hills, probably owes its name, as many brooks their [103] legend, to the supposed talking of water-folk. There was some belief in mer-folk at Kilkee before 1879, but it has nowadays got touched-up for tourists. Such touching-up, however, cannot have affected the ugly, drunken, stupid *merrow* Coomara (sea-dog), who kept the souls of drowned sailors in magic lobster-pots in his house under the sea, off Killard, as related by Crofton Croker.[5] The *merrow's* power of passing through the waves depended on a magic cap, and a duplicate of it enabled his human guest to visit him.

The last reported appearance of a mermaid is so recent as the end of April, 1910. Several people, including Martin Griffin, my informant, saw what they are firmly convinced was a mer-woman in a cove a little to the north of Spanish Point, near Miltown,

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[5] *Op. cit.*, Part II. (1828), pp. 30-58 (" The Soul Cages ").

[P. 204]

511 come ashore in the future, for his use of the term poverty when describing Inis
829 Beag life in a series of articles. The islanders, however, constantly complain of
their indigence privately and deprecate it and are embarrassed by it in the presence
of strangers. Girls and young women are particularly disparaging, and elders are
puzzled by this attitude because the lot of youth is so much easier than was that
of their mothers and grandmothers. Those persons who extol island existence
usually do so in a defensive manner; after conceding that goods are in short supply,
albeit "no one suffers from want of food or clothing," they go on to stress the
healthy climate of the island, the freedom and independence that they enjoy, the
sanctity of Inis Beag and its many saints of the past, and the strength of Catholic
belief. Sometimes the advocate is followed by a denunciation of urban life, where
these essential characteristics are lacking, or by a recounting of the difficulties
being encountered by a relative just arrived in Boston or London.

433 The subsistence economy of Inis Beag always has been dominated by agricultural
241 pursuits, contrary to frequent assertions by writers that farming was
233 subsidiary to fishing two generations ago. Most householders own land on which
they grow potatoes and other vegetables, grass, and sometimes sally rods, and
where they pasture cattle, sheep, goats, horses, and asses. Potatoes are the staple
crop, and after they are harvested the land usually is seeded with grass and used as
pasturage for a number of years before being replanted. Indigenous soils bearing
grass at the back of the island also serve as pasturage, and horses and asses at times
are permitted to roam the trails and common land to forage whatever they can
[262] from the meager flora there. Supplementing potatoes in the diet are various
vegetables, milk from cows and nanny goats, meat from island sheep and poultry,
[342] fish, and other foods, many of which are imported and sold in the shops. Rye is
[343] grown for thatching houses and contiguous outbuildings, as well as barns located
[493] south of the terrace crest, and sally rods are used to weave several types of containers.
The only vehicles in Inis Beag are three two-wheeled carts employed to
transport heavy loads, such as building stones, along the rough and narrow trails.
Most householders own asses or horses, often ridden, which carry burdens in baskets
433 or pull carts. Other subsistence activities are knitting, weaving, crocheting, tailoring,
28 shoemaking, and net making, although the last skill almost has died out.

433 A slowly expanding cash economy features the export of cattle and sheep
[437] reared or fattened in the island and of surplus potatoes, the collection of seaweed
for extraction of its iodine content at a mainland factory, the manufacture of
[28] craft objects, and the keeping of tourists in private homes. Among the craft commodities
produced are cable-knit sweaters, miniature *curach*, stockings knitted at
the local factory in the coast guard station, and articles of clothing worn by the
folk—woven belts, cowhide shoes, and shawls. These goods are sold both to visitors
[657] and to middlemen who resell them in Ireland and export them abroad. The cash
economy is buttressed considerably by government subsidies of many sorts and
[651] by remittances from emigrant kin. Not only are income and property taxes not
[427] collected in Inis Beag, but rents are extremely low, both of which conditions represent
[124] indirect government subsidization. Income information is as difficult to
come by as data concerning pagan supernatural beliefs, disputes, and sexual atti-

ous and high in Inis Beag so as to prevent the sparse soils from being blown away 241 [333]
by Atlantic gales; the truth of the matter is that fences serve as boundaries, are repositories for uprooted rocks that farmers, understandably, do not wish to transport long distances, and by their very construction provide a source of income. Once a field is leveled, it is spread with sand, compost, and sometimes indigenous soils carried from other areas to enrich the new garden. This is a job which is [221]
carried on the year around, and children often are pressed into service, loading [857]
creels with sand from the strand and common land and driving laden animals to the plots above.

Newly made fields can grow potatoes two years in succession before being fallowed, but old ones must lie fallow four years until the eelworm disappears. The folk, however, plant spuds in their old plots every six to ten years, when moss has accumulated to such a degree that the growth of grass sufficient for grazing and haying is impeded. The potato planting technique is known as the "ridge-and-furrow" or "lazy-bed" method on the mainland, but these terms are not used in Inis Beag. Setting a garden involves first of all constructing parallel "ridges," about 30 inches in width, the length of a field. "Ditches" are dug with a spade, and sods are "turned over" onto strips of seaweed; then more dirt is "trenched" over other seaweed, compost, guano, and chemical fertilizers placed in the center of the ridges (see Fig. 6). The whole procedure is called "manuring," and two months later the garden is again trenched with dirt distributed at the base of the sprouting vines. Between the time of seeding and harvesting, the plot is weeded by hand once or twice and sprayed two or three times with a mixture of copper sulphate and water to combat the potato blight.

Potato seeds are purchased in sacks from the agricultural agent or obtained 244
from the previous year's crop, and it takes almost 100 pounds of seed to plant a

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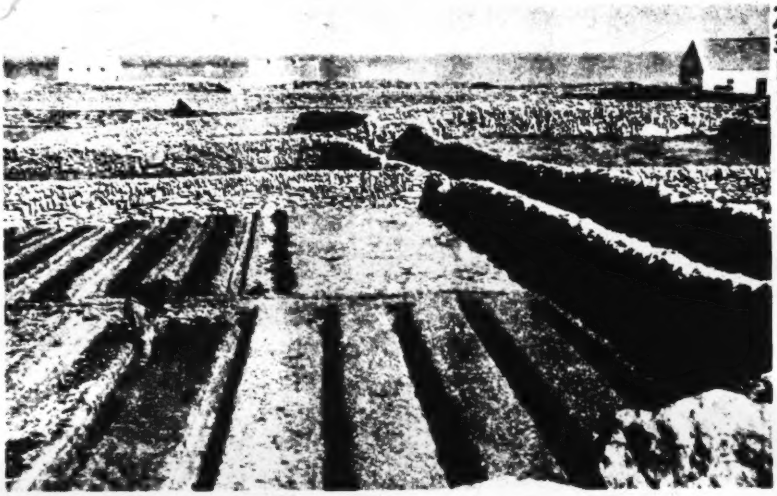

Figure 6. Soil being trenched in setting a garden

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Figure 8. Transporting hay to an outbuilding

249 Those islanders who dwell in thatched houses or who own other buildings which are thatched grow rye, as do a few farmers who use it as fodder. It is planted in recently dug potato fields at the same time as grass and is ready for harvesting the next August. Rye for thatching is pulled rather than cut, and compressed into [342] small bundles which are propped against fences for drying. Pulling is preferred because grass and weeds can be separated out, and the roots will furnish friction [343] to keep the bundles from slipping when they are placed on the roof later. After drying, the bundles are carried to barns or outbuildings to be flailed, winnowed, and stored until used a month or two afterward. Flailing is done by striking the tops of the bundled plants against a stone placed a foot from an indoor wall, in such a way that the seeds are separated and collected at the base of the wall. Later the grain is spread on a flagging and winnowed by allowing handfuls of seed to [246] fall to the rock surface so that wind blows away the chaff. Rye used as fodder is planted with grass and cut when "green" at the same time that hay is cut, and is handled in almost the same way as the latter.

Care of Livestock

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The export of fish, kelp, pigs, cattle, and sheep accounted for 90 percent of the income of Inis Beag folk in 1893, as reported by the Congested Districts Board. The sale of cattle and sheep ranked last, for at that time indigenous soils were not adequate either in extent or grass yield to support many livestock, and fields on the terraces were used mostly for farming. But over the past 70 years

361 It is apparent from the size of these settlements that some such term as hamlet
might be more appropriate than village, but I have chosen to follow island usage.
Within each village, no house is further than 50 yards from its nearest neighbor,
some even sharing the same gable, and a myriad of paths serve to link single and
grouped dwellings with a main road.

184 Although the traditions of Inis Beag and islands in its vicinity can be
designated as a subculture of the Irish system taken as a whole, nevertheless
there are marked differences in custom between them. One might suppose that
cultural variation would be slight in an island as small and stable as Inis Beag, but
[829] the remarkable fact is that there are differences among the four villages. The folk
[628] are well aware of inter-village, inter-island, and island-mainland cultural variability, and they also possess a well defined image of their own way of life. At this
point, I would like to examine the attitudes of the people toward their own communities, Inis Thiar, the mainland, themselves, and outsiders who visit or live
among them.

829 High and Castle Villages attract the fewest opinions. The inhabitants of
628 the former are accused of arriving late at island affairs, especially to mass in the
184 chapel so close at hand, and dwellers in the latter of keeping ferocious dogs which
[231] bark at night and molest visitors. Until recently, each Castle household had from
two to four dogs, and it was possible for those living in Low to know when a
visitor making a night visit had arrived in Castle by the outcry of the animals.
[512] Castle people, like those in Terrace, milk their cows earlier in the day than do
[823] other islanders, and since both settlements are located on the upper terraces and
command exceptional views of the mainland coast and sea around, the dwellers in
each claim that their panorama is the most inspiring.

829 The numerous attitudes toward Low and Terrace Villages mostly reflect
628 their positions in the island and resultant differential acculturation; generally
184 speaking, the local culture becomes more traditional as one moves eastward from
177 Low, the jetty, and the strand. It is often said that Terrace folk "are strangers to
178 the rest of us" and resemble the inhabitants of Inis Thiar, whom many writers and
[342] scientists claim are the most traditional of Irish peasants. More cottages are
[461] thatched and the indigenous costume is more in evidence in Terrace than elsewhere, and the villagers there are the earliest risers and hardest workers and tend
to arrive early for events, in contradistinction to their High neighbors. Families in
Terrace are considered more closely knit and cooperative and the people more
[275] self-reliant than those in the other communities. The men spend less time in the
pubs, do not need drink to "give them courage" to sing and dance, and are livelier
and more extroverted at parties. Not only do Terrace folk believe that their village
is best located as to beauty of land and seascape, but they claim that it is quieter
[241] and the air is healthier there than elsewhere in Inis Beag. Another Terrace custom
often cited is that of farmers using all four types of seaweed as fertilizers and
setting their gardens in the same manner; farmers in the other settlements use
[421] only two or three kinds of seaweed and set their gardens in a variety of ways.
Lastly, the practice of seeking wrack is most prevalent among Terrace men. The
freighter ran aground near Terrace, and the men there were said to have acquired
more salvage than other islanders as a result of their being close to the ship and

585 choosing. The kiss of the newly united pair, which in most of the Western world terminates the marriage ceremony, is lacking in Inis Beag, and after leaving the chapel the couple stand for some time in the yard to receive congratulations from guests and others who have attended the wedding, until the procession forms once again to walk to the home of the groom.

[777] Once there, the groom's mother stands on the threshold and places the wedding cake for a moment on the head of her son, to compound the luck already [535] gained by borrowed tie and shawl and donation of shillings. The newlyweds dance together alone before the first dance figure is formed, but they spend most of the night seated side by side, talking to well wishers, while music, song, and dance [431] joyously abound in the adjoining kitchen. Presents are given the couple only by kin who have emigrated and by outsiders who have known the two long and well; [574] the same tradition holds true at Christmas among older children and adults. The wedding party, as the *cleambnas*, may go on night after night, and so may the third party making up the marriage cycle a month later—the "dragging home," which is celebrated at the bride's former house. The term dragging home is employed when either the vernacular or English are spoken, but the word wedding, and its Irish equivalent *bainis*, are used interchangeably in both tongues. Although the bride must not enter her parents' house for a month after the nuptials, she is free to visit with them elsewhere.

The Family and Kinship

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621 There are 79 inhabitable houses in Inis Beag, although many others of hoary vintage still stand and have been converted into outbuildings. Only 71 of these are lived in by the folk, however; 6 of the other 8 (1 of which houses the Dane) recently have been deserted by emigrants, and the remaining 2 are lived in by the curate and the headmaster. The following is a chart showing the categories of personnel occupying the 71 domiciles:

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Number of Households	*Personnel*
30	Husband, wife, and offspring
5	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's widowed mother
4	Husband and wife who are childless
4	Husband, wife, offspring, and both parents of the husband
3	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's unmarried sister
2	Husband and wife who are childless and both parents of the husband
1	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's father who is a widower
1	Husband, wife, offspring, and both parents of the husband and his unmarried sister
1	Husband and wife whose offspring have emigrated
7	Widow and her unmarried offspring
5	Single man (bachelor)
2	Brother and sister both of whom are unmarried
2	Two brothers and a sister all of whom are unmarried
2	Widower and his unmarried offspring
1	Two bachelor brothers
1	Bachelor and his widowed sister-in-law

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621 three sisters, and ten of two—and they tend to visit together often and lend mutual
593 economic and emotional support.

591 When a man marries, his parents relinquish the holding, and its direction
428 passes into the hands of the newlyweds. Arensberg and Kimball talk of the "west
• 342 room" complex, which may exist in many parts of peasant Ireland but does not in
822 Inis Beag. Houses in north and west Co. Clare "with remarkable uniformity" are
776 aligned east and west, and on the son's marriage the old couple moves into the westernmost room "behind the hearth." This room is linked with the Celtic supernatural, for fairy paths are thought to be located along the western side of many houses, and the pagan afterworld—the Isle of the Blest—is a sunken land mass in the nearby western sea (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:134–136). In Inis Beag, on the contrary, over one-third of the domiciles since 1841 have been aligned north and south, fairy trails are found mostly at the back of the island, and a retiring couple may choose any of three rooms (or more in modern homes) to move into. The west room of Co. Clare is called simply "the room" in Inis Beag.

342 Thirty-four of the 71 inhabited buildings in the island have thatched roofs
[178] (see Fig. 8), while the others are antiquated houses which lately have been reno-
vated, mainly by replacing thatch with slate, or are newly built. The last of the
[177] traditional "cabins" or "cottages" were constructed in the 1930s, and the first of
[657] the modern ones during the 1890s—with two stories initially, and styled and subsidized by the Congested Districts Board. Old and renovated houses are rectangular in shape, are constructed of whitewashed stones with concrete floors, and have a large central kitchen with doors or half-doors to the outside both front and back. "The room" is beyond the kitchen at one end of the building, and two bedrooms (one in the most ancient cabins) are at the other. Lofts for sleeping are in the gable of the roof above "the room" and bedrooms, and are entered by ladder
[372] or staircase from the kitchen. Fireplaces share a common wall and chimney between the kitchen and "the room," as they also may between the two bedrooms; but the kitchen hearth is the most used, and in some homes is not permitted to die out.

351 The space between the cottage and the low stone wall and outbuildings
[343] surrounding it is called the "street." Outbuildings at the back include a toilet and various storage sheds—for spuds and turf sods in particular, although the latter
[244] often are stacked instead against a gable of the cabin. In a portion of the street or a small field beyond the wall, a garden for vegetables is maintained for easy access.
342 The kitchen doors of the house sometimes open into small halls in the front or back, or both, and when the weather is not too cold or blustery, the door opening
[262] to the street on the windward side is kept closed and its opposite open. In the
[264] kitchen, which is the center of family activities, are: the fireplace at which cooking
[415] is done with pot and cooking ovens hung from an iron hook; the table around
[778] which the family eats their five daily meals; the sideboard, known as a "dresser,"
filled with "delph"—both everyday and "best" china; the religious shrine with
[352] "blessed lamp" surrounded by religious pictures and sacred objects; and, occasionally, a "settlebed" which, when closed, serves as a bench during the daytime.

354 The hearth in the kitchen is indented into the wall to provide two hobs,
[352] or seats, and on a chilly or dampish day the folk will nestle inside the fireplace and
[616] sit tightly together on a bench drawn up close to the turf fire for warmth. This
[593]
[178]

fireplace has a profound psychological significance in Inis Beag and, in a sense, is 354 593
a force drawing the family together. Now that only three hookers transport peat 178
from the mainland—when in the past there had been more than a hundred—and
the price of turf increases considerably year by year, coal or bottled gas stoves are
being used by most families. Although coal and gas are cheaper to burn, and coal
throws out more heat than turf, the coal fire in the hearth does not foster
camaraderie as does the peat fire. The replacement of fireplace by stove and the
"stink" and dirtiness of coal are denounced incessantly by the islanders, and the
disappearance of the "sweet smell" of burning sods and a multitude of customs
associated for generations with the peat fire are lamented.

Many functions are served by "the room." It can accommodate the displaced 342 •
parents after their son has married, if all agree, for it has a bed which can 353
serve them (as well as distinguished guests, spectators at parties, and now tourists
and summer language school students). This chamber is the best kept of the house,
with the newest and most valuable of the furniture and often a linoleum floor,
and its walls and ceiling are whitewashed or painted frequently. Family heirlooms
and objects of sentimental value, which are parted with only as a last resort, are
found here. Religious pictures adorn the walls, and on the mantel over the fireplace
are photographs of the family going back generations, especially of those
who have emigrated or are deceased. When "the stations" are performed every [788]
two decades in the cottage, the mass is read in "the room," and certain rubrics
used in this ritual are afterward kept here. Finally, the chamber serves as a dance [574]
floor when the crowd at a party in the house overflows the bounds of kitchen,
hall, and street.

The social universe of the islanders is divided into four segments: close 571
kin or "friends" (Previously, I have used this word in the American sense.), distant 602
kin or "those I have a relationship with," other islanders, and outsiders or 609
strangers. "Friends" normally extend generationally to include ego's parents, grandparents, [572]
children, and grandchildren, and collaterally to include his affines (spouse's
kinsmen), siblings, and first, second, and third cousins—termed, respectively, "four-of-kin,"
"six-of-kin," and "eight-of-kin."[1] With the intensification of inbreeding, 835
most of the folk are eight-of-kin, and this is why the parish priest examines the 602
genealogies of families at the time of the match. Marriage between first cousins is 582
forbidden, between second cousins demands permission from the bishop, and
between third the consent of the parish priest. Distant kin are relatives extended 602
collaterally beyond eight-of-kin, while outsiders include the curates, teachers who 609
are not islanders, lighthouse keepers, the Dane, tourists of local renown, and, as I
have just indicated, even in-marrying women and descendants of recently arrived
immigrants (also, of course, inquisitive anthropologists).

Although inheritance and succession are patrilineal on the island, descent 428
is bilateral—traced through both agnatic (father's) and uterine (mother's) lines 611
--with a strong agnatic bias.

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[1] These positions are pictured horizontally (generationally) and vertically (collaterally) [113]
in block form in Arensberg and Kimball 1940:96 in the chapter "Kinship System." The
Irish kinship system is common to peoples of Western Europe and America (the Eskimo [601]
type), and much of the kinship information reported by Arensberg and Kimball applies to
Inis Beag.

rejuvenate the moribund tradition. However, several men past the age of 40 years 535
still are able to perform jigs, reels, hornpipes, and hop-jigs with dexterity, "when 178
the humor is on them," and are called out at parties and in the pubs; a few women [874]
will step dance in their homes or at small social gatherings.

There is considerable evidence to suggest that the rigid body and arms of 535
the step dancer are an early nineteenth century product of Jansenist doctrine in [175]
the church, which attempted to desexualize dancing. Most of the movement is [177]
below the hips of the dancer, and it is the feet of the performer which are watched [179]
intently by the audience, at least openly. Inis Beag men move their upper bodies [184]
and arms more than is customary on the mainland, and they are not as graceful
as other Irish dancers.

Figure dancing is called "set" dancing in Ireland, and there are many such
dances, each of which combines a number of simple and complex figures performed
by the couples. There is only one set in Inis Beag; it bears no name and is danced
by one or more groups of four couples each. The many figures of the dance are
simple, and it takes about 20 minutes to complete. I have heard young dancers [874]
complain at the end of a night of the tediousness of the single set, and some of
them are learning other Irish figures at language school dances—"The Walls of
Limerick" and "The Bridge of Athlone," among others. The most enjoyed movement
of the local set is the one at the end in which the man holds his partner
closely and twirls her almost violently, sometimes for longer than is prescribed so
that the musician must pause or alter his rhythm. With bodily contact between
partners otherwise so limited, perhaps this figure allows the expression of repressed
sexuality.

Parties

It is appropriate to describe the Inis Beag party and a festive night at the 574 53
pub in this chapter, because they are esthetic as well as social events, in which are
combined storytelling, music, song, and dance. Parties are very much the same,
whether held in the winter or the summer or to welcome home a long departed
emigrant or to "drag home" a new bride. Only two rooms of the house are utilized 574
—the kitchen and "the room" adjoining it—and benches are placed along the walls 342 •
to supplement the chairs and bed on which guests will sit. The barrel or two of 343
stout to be served is placed in the back hall off the kitchen, if there is such a hall, 352
or in a back corner of the kitchen, and one man is assigned the task of dispensing 574
the drink and remaining at his post throughout the night. Another man acts as 273
"pourer" and fills a bucket from which he pours the stout into several mugs and
glasses which are circulated from man to man. A bottle of whiskey is opened and [888]
proffered only to the old men, who often sit in a group beside the fireplace and exchange
anecdotes and tales. On a table in "the room" are placed bottles of wine and [272]
soft drinks to accommodate the women and non-drinkers among the men before [343]
and after refreshments are served. Sometimes an elderly woman will drink surreptitiously
of the whiskey or stout, and it is customary for the musicians and those [562]
who sing and step dance the most to be awarded extra amounts of stout. Women